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## LITURGY

### EDITORIAL

EAST SYRIAN THEOLOGY OF LITURGICAL SPACETIME

Pauly Maniyattu

HOMOGENEITY IN THE CONCEPTION AND  
CELEBRATION OF LITURGY

Fr. Lonappan Arangassery MST

COVENANT INTO QUDDASA  
THE ANAPHORA OF ADDAI AND MARI  
A RE-READING

Sr. Prasanna Vazheeparampil CMC

BOOK REVIEW, NEWS



# CHRISTIAN ORIENT

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## LITURGY

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## Editorial

The Church is getting ready to enter the third millennium. This is particularly true of the Syro-Malabar Church which regained its *sui iuris* status with a Major Archbishop on the eve of the third millennium. This Church of Thomas Christians, tracing its origin from the Apostle Thomas and blessed with numerous priestly and religious vocations unimaginable to the westerner, is hopeful of new vistas of opportunities that may be opened up before her in the years to come. She may also be entrusted with lot of responsibilities with respect to her mission *ad gentes* and pastoral care of her sons and daughters all over the world. Her ecumenical role is also quite significant in the years to come. It is important, however, that this Church sets her house in order before thinking of taking up new responsibilities.

The Synod of the Syro-Malabar Bishops held in Vatican from 6 to 16 January 1996, is a serious attempt to set the house in order. Liturgy being the **source and summit** of every activity of the Church (SC 10), it is proper that the Syro-Malabar Church experiences and goes deep into the richness of the liturgical heritage. The heritage of a Church is not merely a heritage received by one member of the Church but a common patrimony handed over by the forefathers and tested by thousands of years. It is a heritage also shared by other Churches within the Catholic Communion as well as non-catholic and orthodox Churches.

It is important, therefore, that this heritage be handled with utmost care and seriousness. It is disturbing, sometimes, to observe the liturgical texts being discussed and finalized even in responsible forums, very casually, without sufficient preparation or study and taking into consideration the situation in a particular area or a town alone. So also wider ecclesial, inter-ecclesial and ecumenical perspectives are lacking in discussions on liturgy and ecclesial patrimony. This tendency has its negative impact on the inter-ecclesial and ecumenical discussions. It is our wish that the articles in this issue may help us to appreciate better the richness of the liturgical patrimony of the East Syrian Tradition.

Fr Maniyattu, in his article introduces the readers to the East Syrian theology of liturgical Spacetime. According to the author, the expression *liturgical spacetime* means not only liturgical space and time but the entire physical reality of liturgy—the place, objects, persons, words <prayers, readings, music>, actions and time of liturgy. The article gives some important guidelines to the Syro-Malabar Church, in which there is a growing tendency towards *reductionism and simplification* in liturgy. The Church needs to realize the role of space, time, persons, objects, actions and words in liturgy and needs to be introduced to the whole world of signs and symbols through them.



Fr Lonappan Arangassery discusses the problems and prospects of *homogeneity in the conception and celebration of the Liturgy* which is decided by the recent Synod of the Syro-Malabar Bishops held in Vatican. The author is of the opinion that, no serious efforts are so far made to implement the unanimous decisions of the Synod. He also comments on the interventions of the experts and points out the reasons and the various other factors that come on the way implementing these unanimous decisions of the Synod.

Sr Prasanna Vazheeparambil CMC re-reads the Anaphora of the Apostles in the light of covenant theology. Quoting L. Bouyer, she introduces her subject stating that the christian liturgies are not *motherless and fatherless like Melchizedek*. The Christian liturgy has its historical antecedents closely linked to the Jewish liturgy which is basically a covenantal liturgy. Hence a Christian liturgy cut off from these antecedents is a fiction. Sr Prasanna brings out clearly how Holy Qurbana, which is the celebration of the New Covenant, is related to the OT covenantal celebration by analyzing the various prayers and rites of the anaphora as well as the post anaphoral and communion rites.

On behalf of *Christian Orient* I express my sincere gratitude and indebtedness to the authors for contributing the articles to this issue of the periodical.

**Fr Lonappan Arangassery MST**

Editor

## East Syrian Theology of Liturgical Spacetime

### 1. 'Space and Time' or 'Spacetime'?

A theological study of the liturgical spacetime requires a clear phenomenological understanding of the realities represented by the term 'spacetime' and its adjective 'liturgical'. As regards the term spacetime, first, we shall try to understand its phenomenological meaning and then we shall see how far such a terminology is suited to the ancient Syriac literature, especially on liturgy.

The expression 'spacetime' is to a great extent prompted by the understanding of modern physics on space and time. Space and time are not two distinct realities independent of each other. Rather, they constitute the one single reality, spacetime.<sup>1</sup>

Space may not be considered apart from time and vice versa. Spacetime in the language of physics means the physical reality with the dimensions of space and time. Expressions like liturgical space and liturgical time are frequently used by liturgists and theologians as well, precisely to mean the place of liturgy and time of liturgy. The expression 'liturgical spacetime' means not only liturgical space and time but the entire physical reality of liturgy. Thus it includes the place, objects, persons, words (prayers, readings, music), actions, and time of liturgy. These all are inseparable parts of a single reality, the liturgical spacetime.

Regarding space the most frequent terms with liturgical features, used in Syriac literature are *atra*, *dāka* or *dākta* and *rawma*. *Atra*<sup>2</sup> and

1. The distinguished physicist Stephen W. Hawking expresses this as follows: "The theory of relativity does, however, force us to change fundamentally our ideas of space and time. We must accept that time is not completely separate from and independent of space, but is combined with it to form an object called spacetime". S. HAWKING, *A Brief History of Time*, New York 1989, 24.
2. *Atra* has different levels of meaning. First of all it means place. Cf. R. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, tomus 1-2, Oxford 1879-1901, 425. It may be rendered into English also as space. Cf. J. PAYNE SMITH (Mrs. MARGOLIOUTH), *A Compendious Syriac English Dictionary Founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. PAYNE SMITH*, Oxford 1990, 33. While translating *atra* from Ephrem's works, E. Beck often uses the German word Raum, an equivalent term for space. Cf. Beck's GT of *HFid* 10. 22; 30. 1,3,4; 45. 4-8; 57. 2,3 (CSCO 154/155. Syr. 73/74); *HCruc* 3. 3-10 (CSCO 248/249. Syr. 108/109). J. B. Morris uses the term space. See for example



*dūka*<sup>3</sup> literally mean place or space, whereas *rawma*<sup>4</sup> stands for high place or altitude. It is important to note that Syriac writers attribute multifarious connotations to these terms. *Atra* in the liturgical context signifies more than what it actually means literally. At times it means the earth and at times heaven.<sup>5</sup> The plural forms of

*atra* and *rawma* refer to holy places, special places, high places, and mountains in the sense of sacred space.<sup>6</sup> Another word denoting space is *metha* from the root *mtah* meaning extension.<sup>7</sup> There are two important terms for time also. *Zabna* from the root *zban* signifies time in its chronological sense.<sup>8</sup> *Edana* stands for time which

*HFid* 30. 1,3,4 according to the ET of Morris. J. B. MORRIS, *Select Works of St. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac with Notes and Indices*, Oxford 1847, 201. Beck translates *atra* simply as Ort (place) also. Cf. *HFid* 22. 12; 45.9.

3. terms *dūka* and *dūkta* from the root *dūk* mean place. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus*, 835. They are as a rule translated as place (in GT Ort). Beck translates the *dūkta* in *HCruc* 8.1-2 as Ort (CSCO 248/249 Syr. 108/109). Cf. also the GT of *dūka* in *SFid* 2.359-362 (CSCO 212/213. Syr. 88/89). While referring to the places of bishops, priests, and faithful in the liturgical assembly *Didascalia Apostolorum* employs the word *dūkta*. Cf. A. VOOBUS, ed. & trans., *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, CSCO 407; syr. 179, Louvain 1979, 143-145.
4. *Rawma* means altitude, high place, height. Metaphorically it also means heaven. *Mlek rawma* is heavenly king; *gūšma d-rawma* is heavenly body. Cf. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus*, 3860; PAYNE SMITH, *Syriac Dictionary*, 535. Ephrem calls christ as *emra d-rawma* (Lamb from on high or heaven). *HAzy* 2.5. We can find in the *Odes of Solomon*, an instance where the idea of 'high place' means heaven. See J. H. CHARLESWORTH, *The Odes of Solomon*, ed. & trans., Oxford 1973, 48.5; 127.2 Cf. also *Dem.*, XIX. 8,9 (PS I, 861). In both of these cases the reference seems to be to the holy place of God, namely the temple or the sanctuary, which is simply referred to as the high place. Therefore, it is lawful to consider the idea of the mountain or high place with regard to God as referring to heaven or to the temple, the image of heaven on earth.
5. *Atra* means also land (terra), region, and field. *Atranaya* means terrestrial whereas *atiraya* is heavenly. *Atra d-alaha* means literally place of God. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus*, 427.
6. In Balai's hymn on the *Dedication of the New Church in Qennesrin* the term *atra* has a liturgical significance, meaning the holy place or the sanctuary. J. J. OVERBECK, *S. Ephraemi Syri ... Opera Selecta*, Oxford 1865, 252. str. 14. McVey translates *atra* as holy place; cf. K. McVEY, "The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol", *DOP* 37 (1983), 121. The word for mountain *taura* may mean space also. While translating *SFid* 1.142 Beck puts *Raum* for *taura*.
7. It signifies space or space of time. *Methanaya* = expansus, spacious. Cf. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus*, 2248-2249. For the examples of use in Syr. literature see *HFid* 30.4; *sogitha* str. 5.
8. Cf. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus*, 1077. Payne Smith renders it *kairos* also. *Lzabneh* means opportune time. For the use of this term by Ephrem cf. *HFid* 50.1; 78.23; *SFid* 3.317-319; 6.131-132; *HAzy* 5.18. Ephrem speaks of the *amr zbna* (temporal lamb) (*HCruc* 2.6).



is equivalent to the Greek *kairos*. It signifies right time or convenient time.<sup>9</sup> It is curious that in the Syrian writings space (*atra*) can also mean time.<sup>10</sup> In the Syriac language it seems that an absolute distinction between space and time is not possible.

The application of the expression 'spacetime' in the language of liturgical symbolism helps us to understand better the meaning of the liturgical reality. Thus it becomes clear that the particular symbolic elements of the liturgy are significant according to their relation to the symbolic reality as a whole. Taking into consideration the theological trend of the Syrian Fathers who view both space and time as symbolic and mutually related realities, it may be convenient to use the expression 'spacetime', contributed by modern Physics. According to Syrian writers like Ephrem *atra-zabna* cannot be judged by our physical experience, especially in the liturgical context. In other words *atra-zabana* is a *raza*

or mystery. All space is filled with God's *raza* (HFid 4.9), and consequently space itself is a *raza*. Likewise, time in its function as a symbol shares the features of mystery (HAzy 5. 23).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, in their approach to liturgical spacetime the Syrian writers consider it in intrinsic relation with the mysteries celebrated.

Applying the term spacetime we view the whole liturgy as an integral unity of symbols.<sup>12</sup> We do not speak of the symbols in the liturgy. The whole liturgy is to be considered as a symbolic whole. Each element of the liturgy is to be considered as part of the symbolic whole. We cannot separate the liturgical space from the liturgical persons, actions, prayers etc. This is true about the liturgical persons and objects too. Here we have to see how such ideas were maintained in the East Syrian liturgical tradition. The great significance of the consecrated altar which the East Syrian Church attached to the Qurbana, is perhaps, culpably strange to the

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9. It means also season, moment, etc. *D-'edan* means temporary. In Syriac both terms are sometimes used together. *'Edzban v'edan* means until the time appointed. Cf. PAYNE SMITH, *Syriac Dictionary*, 401. For the examples of use by Ephrem see *HCruc* 3.1-2; 6.2,5,15.
  10. Metaphorically it has the meaning of the space of time also. It may be used to mean opportunity and occasion. Cf. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus*, 425. Cf. also CHARLESWORTH, *Odes*, 23.
  11. The fundamental schema of the symbolic thought pattern of Ephrem is applicable to time also. The past is the figure, the present is the reality of experience, and the future is the 'not yet' complete experience awaiting the blessed. Thus one and the same mystery has different time-dimensions such as past, present and future. Cf. P. YOUSIF, *L'eucharistie chez Saint Ephrem de Nisibe*, OCA 224, Rome 1984, 358. The modern understanding of liturgical time is in tune with the patristic understanding. R. Taft observes: "... the ritual memorial is the present efficacious sign of the same eternal reality. The ritual moment, then, is a synthesis of past, present, and future, as is always true in God's time." R. TAFT, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, Washington, D. C. 1984, 3.
  12. This view is the outcome of the research on the East Syrian liturgical spacetime. See the doctoral dissertation P. MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth: The Theology of Liturgical Spacetime in the East Syrian Qurbana*, Rome 1995.



modern liturgists.<sup>13</sup> The unity of space and persons is clear from the assignment of special spaces to the different faithful in the church. The priest could not celebrate the Qurbana without an ordained deacon;<sup>14</sup> the priest could not consecrate if there were no cross and the gospel on the altar.<sup>15</sup> According to the principle of the unity of symbols, the liturgical action of proclaiming the gospel becomes meaningful only when it is done in the earthly Jerusalem symbolized by the bema.

## 2. Sacred and Profane

The phenomenological basis of the term 'liturgical' is found in the distinction of spacetime into sacred and profane. Religious phenomenology makes the classical distinction of the cosmic realities into sacred and profane.<sup>16</sup> The recognition of such a distinction, though there are numerous theories explaining the process of that recognition, accounted for the origin of religion itself. The distinction into sacred and profane is to be considered in the study of any religious worship. A closer analysis shows that the ideas of the sacred and profane in the Christian religion, especially in its East Syrian form, are either inspired by or very similar to such ideas found in the great pre

Christian religions like the Mesopotamian religions, Jewish religion and Hindu religion. In all these religions the attitude towards the sacred is remarkably similar. The ultimate function of the sacred spacetime is the divine-human communication.<sup>17</sup> Consecrated spacetime is a door to God's spacetime. In the liturgy this communication is communication of salvation realized in the sacramental mode. Liturgy is the meeting of heaven and earth; of heavenly spacetime and earthly spacetime.

## 3. Theology of the East Syrian Liturgical Spacetime

The theology of liturgical spacetime aims at understanding the theological meaning of the different elements or aspects of the symbolic reality of liturgy.

### 3. 1. Evolution of the Liturgical Space

As regards the symbolism of the sacred space there is a gradual evolution.<sup>18</sup> It may be considered the symbolic evolution of the profane space into sacred space. *Didascalia Apostolorum's* assignment of the sacred space to different persons of liturgy agrees with the idea of the symbolic evolution of the sacred space.

13. See MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 159-160.

14. Cf. The letter of Patriarch Išoyahb I to Mar Jacob of Darai, can. 2. J. B. CHABOT, ed. & trans., *Synodicon orientale ou recueil des synodes nestoriens*, Paris 1902, 429.

15. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation of the Offices", P. PODIPARA, ed. & trans., in G. VAVANIKUNNEL, ed., *Homilies and interpretations on the Holy Qurbana*, Changanacherry 1977, 95.

16. On the distinction of sacred and profane see M. ELIADE, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans., W. R. TRASK, New York 1961, 20,30; J. P. AUDET, "Le sacré et le profane: leur situation en christianisme", NRT 79 (1957), 43-44; R. OTTO, *The Idea of the Holy*, London 1929, 12-24; L. BOUYER, *Liturgy and Architecture*, Notre Dame 1967, 156-157.

17. MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 266-277.

18. See the theological study of the East Syrian sacred space in MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 151-184.



And for the presbyters let there be separated a place on the eastern side of the house, and let the bishop's chair be among them and let the presbyters sit with them.

And again, let the laymen sit in another eastern part of the house. For thus it is required that the presbyters shall sit in the eastern part of the house with the bishops, and the laymen, and then the women; so that when you stand up to pray, the leaders may stand first, and after them the laymen, and then also the women.<sup>19</sup>

The evolution of the liturgical space has two orders. First a cosmological order: According to this there is the narthex, *hayklā* representing earth (place of the people: west-women, east-men), *qestromā* representing the region between earth and heaven, *madbha* representing heaven. The second order is that of the salvation economy. The structure of *bema* in the middle of *haykla* represents the earthly Jerusalem. It is connected to the *madbha* through a pathway called *šqagonā*, the way of salvation along which the Son of God comes down from heaven to the earthly Jerusalem for the ministry of salvation; the way along which the angels of God come down and go up; the way to heaven along which the saviour ascended into heaven. *Madbha* is the heaven into which Christ and the good thief

entered. The altar in the sanctuary is the heavenly altar of the sacrifice; the tomb of the Lord, as the symbol of the heavenly altar; it is throne of God; it is the table of Lord of the eschatological banquet. The cross in the sanctuary is the symbol of the Lord coming in his glory; it is the symbol of the eschatological Sun; the symbol of the heavenly east and the heavenly time.

### 3. 2. Liturgical Spacetime: Image of the Heavenly Spacetime

Even though heaven is beyond the limitations of spacetime, we speak of a heavenly space and heavenly time. The new time of heavenly life is in no way limited. Space, too, is perfect without any limitation. Space and time are so perfect in the heavenly life that they become one and the same reality. Aphrahat describes this new spacetime:

But this is right for a speaker, to liken and call that place the abode of God, and the place of life, the perfect place, the place of light, the place of glory, the sabbath of God, the day of rest, the repose of the righteous, the joy of the just, the abode and dwelling place of the righteous and the holy, the place of our hope, the sure abode of our trust, the place of our treasure, the place that shall assuage our weariness and remove our afflictions, sooth our sighs.<sup>20</sup>

19. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 130–131.

20. *Dem.*, XXII. 13 (PS I, 1020). ET: "Selections Translated into English from the Demonstrations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage", J. GWYNN, ed., in NPNF, Second Series, XIII, Edinburgh 1989, 407. We can note a striking similarity in Aphrahat's presentation of the new spacetime of the eschatological experience with the spacetime concept of modern phenomenology. Though both of them represent different realities there is all the more the possibility of establishing a reasonable symbolic relationship.



Aphrahat finds it reasonable to call *that place* (a spatial reality) as the *sabbath of God and day of rest* (a reality of time). It means that in eschatological life there is no distinction of space and time.

The eucharistic spacetime is the image of the heavenly spacetime and therefore, the former acquires many of the features of the latter. The eucharist renders time eternal. Participation in the eucharistic liturgy enables one to transcend the limits of time and enter the sphere of sacred time which is not limited as ordinary time. In Christ the linear time gives way to the new time of the Kingdom.<sup>21</sup> Liturgical time is participation in the new time of Christ. *Didascalia Apostolorum* mentions some of the realities in time and contrasts them with eternity which is accessible through the divine liturgy.<sup>22</sup>

The earthly liturgy is only an image or symbol of the heavenly liturgy.<sup>23</sup> *Liber Graduum*, a 4th century Syriac work, emphasizes the relation between the heavenly and earthly liturgies. The heavenly Church and its ministry are the source of the earthly Church and its ministry:

As for that Church in heaven, from it all that is fair takes its beginning; from it light dawns on us in all directions; in its likeness the Church on earth has come to exist, with its priests and altar, and according to the pattern of its ministry the body ministers outwardly, and the heart acts as priest inwardly, and those who devote themselves to this visible Church become like to it [i.e. the heavenly Church] and follow it.<sup>24</sup>

The visible and public level of the ministry is the image of the heavenly level.<sup>25</sup>

In short, in every respect the dispensation which is on earth is like to that which is in heaven. And because men did not comprehend that heavenly one, he gave them a likeness of it on earth, so that while standing in the visible Church and eating of the visible altar, they might have eternal life in the hidden Church which is in heaven, and might eat from the hidden altar; unutterable ministry too great for the mouth of men. The visible ministry is like to the hidden, and all that is seen is an image

21. Cf. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 234.

22. See *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 136. The idea of liturgy as participation in eternity is also found elsewhere, Cf. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 34-35.

23. "The Church being the type of Heaven, her liturgy is an image of the celestial liturgy; and liturgical ceremonies, mainly Eucharist, by their symbolism, make the faithful share the heavenly liturgy." P. YOUSIF, "The Divine Liturgy According to the Rite of the Assyro-Chaldean Church", in J. MADEY, ed., *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*, Kottayam-Paderborn 1982, 189.

24. LGr, 12, 2 (PS III, 291. 13-21). ET: MURRAY, *Symbols*, 265. According to LGr it was the transgression of Adam that accounted for the earthly version of the ministry. "God gave them the visible ministry on earth in the likeness of that heavenly one, so that they might not perish utterly." LGr, 28. 8 (PS III, 800. 18-21). ET: R. MURRAY, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, London 1977, 269.

25. Cf. MURRAY, *Symbols*, 263.



[*tupsa*] of whatever is not seen,<sup>26</sup> and from the likeness of whatever is seen, spiritual [men] show to anyone who believes and desires to see.<sup>27</sup>

*Liber Patrum*, a 13th or 14th century East Syrian canonical work describes the places, time, and objects of liturgical celebration as symbols of the heavenly spacetime.

The church is the type of both worlds. The temple is the present world, and is like the outer sanctuary of the tabernacle of the covenant into which the priests, deacons and the assembly of the people always enter. The altar or the sanctuary is indeed the type of the future world, and of the 'holy of holies' of the tabernacle of the covenant into which once a year the high priest entered.<sup>28</sup>

The veils have an important function

in the cosmic symbolism. They mark the boundary between the heavenly and earthly spacetime.

The veils are the doors of the sanctuary and of the holy of holies. They are the figure of the firmament separating us from heaven. The opening of the veils and the bringing out of the cross is like the removing of the firmament on the day of resurrection when Christ appears.<sup>29</sup>

According to Ephrem, the space and time of the primordial Paradise become the type of the Church in which the eucharist is celebrated,<sup>30</sup> but the same Church<sup>31</sup> in turn becomes the type<sup>32</sup> of the eschatological Paradise where the heavenly eucharist is celebrated (*HParad* 5.11). Though the three realities may seem to be distinct from one another, in Ephrem's vision they are intimately related. Therefore, the eucharist that is being celebrated here and now in the

26. The same idea is found in *Odes of Solomon* also.

"The likeness of that which is below

Is that which is above.

For everything is from above,

And from below there is nothing." CHARLESWORTH, *Odes*, 123. 4-5.

27. LGr, 28. 8 (PS III, 797: 20 - 800. 14). ET: MURRAY, *Symbols*, 269.

28. *Liber Patrum*, J. M. VOSTE, ed. & trans., Fonti, serie II, fasc. XVI: Caldei-Diritto antico III, Vaticano 1940, 36. The texts from *Liber Patrum*, cited in English, are my own translations based on J. M. Vosté's Latin translation. The page numbers given in the notes refer to those of Vosté's Latin version.

29. *Liber Patrum*, 37.

30. Ephrem compares the supper of Jesus with Eden (Cf. *CDiat* 19. 4). The contrast is made between the places (cenacle and terrestrial Paradise), the persons (Jesus, Apostles and Adam) and the actions (benediction of Christ, negligence of Adam). Cf. YOUSIF, *Eucharistie chez Ephrem*, 67-68.

31. "Ephrem considère l'Eglise comme le lieu sacramental du Paradis restauré (*HParad* 2.13; 6.7). A. DE HALLEUX, "Saint Ephrem le Syrien", *RTL* 14 (1983), 353.

32. "Ainsi l'Eucharistie, nourriture spirituelle, est déjà une anticipation du Paradis". F. GRAFFIN, "L'eucharistie chez saint Ephrem", *ParOr* 4 (1973), 109.



Church<sup>33</sup> has the features of eschatological life. For example the priest in our liturgy is not just a man in space and time. The church building is not just a structure in spacetime. Likewise the prayers, gestures and movements in our liturgy transcend the level of ordinary spacetime. Ephrem gives great importance to the space of the liturgy.<sup>34</sup> *HCruc* 3.3-18 speaks of the Upper Room as the first sacred space in the Church.<sup>35</sup> It is the first eucharistic celebration that made that space (*dūktā*) blessed.<sup>36</sup> In the liturgical celebration the mystery of the eucharist is adapted to time.

Thus the spacetime of the eucharist serves as an intermediary between the space and time of ordinary experience and the new spacetime of the Kingdom. Eucharistic spacetime has the features of both these types. Participation in it enables the transcendence of the spacetime of ordinary experience and entry into

the new spacetime of the heavenly *bridal chamber*.

Theodore of Mopsuestia underlines the symbolic connection between the heavenly and earthly liturgies:

Because the priest performs things found in heaven through symbols and signs, it is necessary that his sacrifice also should be as their image, and that he should represent a likeness of the service of heaven. It would be impossible for us to be priests and do priestly service outside the ancient law if we did not possess the likeness of heavenly things.<sup>37</sup>

Thus the Christian liturgy is something more than a symbol; it shares in the reality itself. Christ is our High Priest in reality. The priest represents the true High Priest, performing the figure of the service of the ineffable sacrifice of Christ, and through his figure he dimly represents the image of the unspeakable heavenly

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33. The Church has become the dispenser of the living bread, the eucharist. Cf. *Hazy* 6. 6; *HVirg* 37. 2. Even though in both of these the explicit reference is to the Church as the community, there can be at least an implicit reference to the church as a building with its altar. Cf. BECK, "Die Eucharistie bei Ephräm", OC 38 (1954), 50.
  34. The space becomes the vehicle of the reliving of the event of salvation. "Le lieu relie à l'événement; il le fait en quelque sorte revivre. Telle est l'expérience du fidèle se tenant dans un lieu saint; les pierres évoquent les mystères, mais elles seules perçoivent l'événement (Cf. *HCruc* 3.10)." YOUSIF, *Eucharistie chez Ephrem*, 136.
  35. The Upper Room is compared with the Tabernacle of the Holy of Holies, and the former is considered superior to the latter. *HCruc* 3. 12. When Ephrem speaks of the Upper Room as the first church and the first altar the reference is indeed to the church as building, even though the word used for is *edta*
  36. "C'est une sanctification de l'espace en vue de l'interiorité et de l'authenticité." YOUSIF, *Eucharistie chez Ephrem*, 141.
  37. A. MINGANA, ed. & trans., *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, WS 6, Cambridge 1933 (= THEODORE, *Eucharist*), 79.



things and of the supernatural and incorporeal hosts.<sup>38</sup>

The representation of the invisible hosts is still another evidence for the heavenly character of the Christian sacrifice. The deacons represent a likeness of the service of the spiritual messengers and ministers.<sup>39</sup>

Narsai views the heavenly and earthly liturgies as parallel institutions. In homily XXXII "On the Church and on the Priesthood" (*ChPriest*) he speaks of this parallelism:

A holy temple the Creator built for them of earth, that in it they might offer the worship of love spiritually. A holy temple and a holy of holies He adorned, He fashioned: a sanctuary on earth and a holy of holies in the heavens above. In the earthly sanctuary He commanded that (men) should perform the priestly office mystically; and in the heavenly also

with the same works, without doubt. Two several institutions He made in His incomprehensible wisdom; and He filled them with the temporal and everlasting riches. An earthly abode He called the earthly sanctuary; and a holy of holies He called that institution which is hidden in the height.<sup>40</sup>

Gabriel Qatraya, too, is convinced of the symbolism of the spacetime liturgy as the image of the heavenly liturgy. "...Therefore, our participation in the holy Mysteries is the symbol of our participation with Him in the Kingdom of heaven".<sup>41</sup> The Communion of the mysteries indicates the Communion which we will have with Christ in the coming world.<sup>42</sup> The time of the reception of the eucharist is the type of the eschatological union with Christ.<sup>43</sup> This means that with the Communion we enter the new spacetime of heaven through symbols.

38. THEODORE, *Eucharist*, 83. Cf. F. J. REINE, *The Eucharistic Doctrine and Liturgy of the Mystagogical Catecheses of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, The Catholic University of Washington, D. C. 1942, 58.

39. Cf. THEODORE, *Eucharist*, 83-84. Cf. O. CASEL, "Neue Zeugnisse für das Kultmysterium", *JL* 13 (1935), 116.

40. *ChPriest* 62. It is possible to think that by the reference to 'the holy temple on earth' Narsai meant the Church as the people of God. However, the specific references to the performance of the priestly office and to the manner of consecration, which follows the cited text, point to the Church gathered in its liturgical place. As we have seen already in Aphrahat and Ephrem, (See sections 3.1.1-3.1.4 and 3.2.1-3.2.3 in the previous chapter) the term temple has a multifarious connotation, not excluding the notion of a building, however.

41. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation", 102. Cf. ABRAHAM BAR LIPAH, "Interpretatio", *CSCO*, tom. 92, 165; YOHANNAN BAR ZO'BI, *Explanation*, 59.

42. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation", 104. Qatraya tries to present the communion with Jesus, that we have through the eucharist, as if it is a physical union. "Whenever we take them in our hands, we ought to think as that we embrace and kiss our Saviour and that we mix His body with our body and mingle His blood with our blood..." *Ibid.*, 100.

43. Cf. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation", 104.



The Anonymous Author's interpretation of the *sanctus* provides us with a clear understanding of his concept of the eucharistic spacetime.

... This means, heaven and earth have been already made one Church neither heaven is heaven nor earth is earth because the time and space composite have been dissolved; for heaven is the heaven of earth and earth is the earth of heaven. Certainly, unless there was (might be) a heaven above, there might not be an earth below, and unless there was an earth below, there might not be a heaven above. Now that those above and those below are brought into a single Church, there is neither "above" nor "below". And yet, God appeared on earth, and our nature ascended into heaven; and when God descended to us, earth became heaven; and when the Son of our race was elevated, heaven became earth. Wherefore heaven and earth have become one, and there is neither heaven nor earth; and we were already constituted with the spiritual ones. It is their predication itself—"holy", that we recite as being perfected through resurrection.<sup>44</sup>

The liturgical spacetime attains a new state in which it can neither be called truly earth nor heaven. It becomes a single united reality. This is emphatically expressed in the words "neither heaven is heaven nor earth is earth". The composite of space and time attains a new state of existence. The state of the new

spacetime, according to the *Expositio* is not a mere transformation of the cosmic space and time. It is also a transformation of the heavenly spacetime. For the liturgical assembly, heaven becomes earth. The heavenly persons are present in the liturgy on earth.

The eucharistic spacetime is only an anticipation of the heavenly eucharistic spacetime. In other words, the reality of the eucharistic celebration in its space, time, persons and actions is a mystery anticipating the eucharistic celebration in the new spacetime. Therefore, the space and time of our eucharistic celebration here and now are not to be compared with the spacetime of empirical knowledge.

The prayers and actions of Christ symbolized through the prayers and actions of the persons, give to the liturgical space the power of representing heaven and earth. The convergence of these symbolic elements in the sacred time of liturgy makes possible the real encounter between heaven and earth: not only between heavenly and earthly space, but between the heavenly and earthly spacetime.

### 3.3. The Spacetime of Christ

Ancient East Syrian Writings and liturgical commentaries emphasised the importance of the liturgical spacetime as the new spacetime of Christ himself. This is the space and time for the encounter with Christ. The liturgical spacetime is the celebration of the mysteries of Christ. If we analyse the individual elements

44. *Anonymi auctoris expositio officiorum ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensi vulgo adscripta. Accedit Abrahæ Bar Lipheh interpretatio officiorum*, R. H. CONNOLLY, ed. & trans., CSCO Scriptores syri, series secunda, tom. 91-92, Roma 1913-1915 (*Expositio I* = tom. 91; *Expositio II* = tom. 92) *Expositio II*, 55; Syr. text, 58.



of the liturgical spacetime we see how each of them symbolically represents the mystery of Christ. The space of the liturgy is Christ's space;<sup>45</sup> its time is his own time; it is he who is acting and praying in the liturgy. The designation *raze* for the eucharistic celebration points to the fact that the spacetime of liturgy is the celebration of the mysteries of Christ.

According to Ephrem, our liturgy is a participation in the new spacetime of Christ.<sup>46</sup> In *HCruc* there are clear allusions to the fact that Christ is the new spacetime of the eucharistic celebration. Christ is considered as the altar and the lamb; the offering and the offerer (*HCruc* 3.10).<sup>47</sup> Christ is called the true altar, *Madbha Qusta*. He is the Lamb from the heavenly space (*HAzy* 2.5).<sup>48</sup> Christ is our Pasch (*HAzy* 4.26). In him is fulfilled every symbol concerning the spacetime of the eucharist.<sup>49</sup> In the commentaries on the Qurbana, Theodore and Narsai show the liturgical spacetime as the celebration of the mysteries of Christ.<sup>50</sup>

We find the notion of liturgical spacetime as the spacetime of Christ developed by the later commentators of the East Syrian Qurbana.<sup>51</sup> Being the space of Christ, the church building is the meeting place of heaven and earth. The symbolism of the liturgical architecture reveals this. The *hayklā* represents the place of the people of God who are still in the earthly Church. The *bema* represents earthly Jerusalem and as such the place of the accomplishment of the salvific mystery of Jesus. The sanctuary is the symbol of heaven, the 'space' of the glorified Lord. The *qestromā* serves as the intermediary space between heaven and earth. The *šqaqonā* represents the pathway between heaven and earth. The altar is Lord's tomb, the throne of God, and the table of the Kingdom.

Commentators like Gabriel Qatraya, Abraham Bar Lipah, the Anonymous Author, and Yohannan Bar Zo'bi interpret the prayers, actions, and persons of the liturgy as symbols of the mysteries of Christ.<sup>52</sup> It is Christ himself who is present through the liturgical persons.

45. Cf. J. CORBON, *The Wellspring of Worship*, trans., M. J. O'CONNELL, New York 1988, 132–134.

46. We find the specialities of Christ's new time described in *HNat* 4. Ephrem contrasts between the transitory time *zabna aboura* and God's eternal *d-l lam* time. Cf. *HNat* 4. 71. Of the features of Christ's new time see also *Hcruc* 6. 2, 5, 15.

47. Cf. E. BECK, "Die Eucharistie bei Ephräm", OC 38 (1954), 42.

48. The word *rawma* is used in the sense of heaven. It is an allusion that even in other cases the term *rawma* is used simply to mean high place, some sort of a transcendental space or heavenly space *HAzy* 3.8 views Christ as the lamb that gives life, enabling one to transcend death and time. Cf. *HAzy* 4.2. Thus Christ, the *emra d-rawma* and the *emra d-hayya*, is the dispenser of the new space of heaven and the new time of eternity. Cf. also *HAzy* 3.11, 14, 19.

49. Cf. *HAzy* 5.23. "Das Symbol (war) in Agypten, die Wirklichkeit (ist) in der Kirche—die Besiegelung der Vergeltung (wird) in (Himmel)—reich (sein)." GT: BECK, CSCO 249; Syr 109, 11.

50. See MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 70–75; 85–87.

51. See MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 93–103; 113–122.

52. See MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 93–103; 113–122.



### 3.4. The Spacetime of Salvation

East Syrian tradition stresses the idea that the spacetime of Christ in the liturgy is the spacetime of salvation. The eucharistic liturgy, according to Gabriel Qatraya, commemorates "the whole dispensation of God which was perfected through Christ in the world."<sup>53</sup> Yohannan Bar Zo'bi makes this idea very clear: "In His mysteries, the Holy Church commemorates all along the successive unfolding of the service: the day of His birth, His baptism and His victory over the devil, His passion, His death, resurrection and ascension."<sup>54</sup> Interpreting the prayers and actions in the Qurbana the commentators say that he Lord comes to the earthly Jerusalem, we hear his words, we experience his healing touch, our sins are forgiven, we participate in his passion, we enter with him and the Good Thief into the paradise. The liturgical space such as the sanctuary, altar, cross, hayklā, and bema symbolize the historical space of salvation. The 6th century *Sogitha*<sup>55</sup> on the cathedral church of Edessa shows how the liturgical space can represent the mystery of salvation.

Exalted are the mysteries of this temple in which the heaven and earth symbolize the most exalted Trinity and our Saviour's dispensation. (*Sogitha*, str. 20).

The mystery of the eucharist makes the temple capable of bearing the symbol of the dispensation of Christ and the mystery of the Trinity. The Edessan hymn shows the church as a revelation of the Trinity.<sup>56</sup> The three facades with the same form (str. 12), one light shining from the three open windows in the sanctuary (str. 13), and heaven and earth symbolized by the temple,<sup>57</sup> all represent the Trinity.

Clearly portrayed in it are the mysteries of both Your Essence and Your Dispensation.

He who looks closely will be filled at length with wonder. (*Sogitha*, str. 3)

The church serves as the representation of the economy fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The ambo represents in several ways the dispensation fulfilled by Christ.<sup>58</sup>

The liturgical persons like the priest, archdeacon, deacons, and other ministers symbolize the persons of the history of salvation. The liturgical actions such as the processions between sanctuary and bema, liturgy of the Word, transfer of gifts, anaphora, and Communion symbolize the whole history of salvation. In other words, the time of liturgy becomes the time of salvation. Thus the different elements of the liturgical spacetime

53. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation", 89.

54. YOHANNAN BAR ZO'BI, *Explanation of the Divine Mysteries*, ET: T. MANNOORAMPARAMPIL, OIRSI, Kottayam 1992, 18.

55. Though this hymn portrays a church having considerable features of the Byzantine architecture, the theological interpretation found in the hymn is greatly influenced by the East Syrian Fathers like Ephrem and Narsai. We can find also the influence of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Jacob of Sarug. K McVey observes: "Ephrem provides a basis from which the ideas stated explicitly in the Edessa Hymn might have developed." McVEY, "Domed Church", 113.

56. Cf. THOMSON, "Architectural Symbolism, in classical Armenian Literature", JTS, NS 30 (1979), 111.

57. According to Balai's hymn on the Qennesrin church the church building becomes heaven on earth. OVERBECK, *Opera Selecta*, 251,

58. Cf. MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 30.



constitute a single symbolic reality of salvific spacetime.

The liturgical celebration also symbolizes the heavenly phase of the salvation. Thus Communion is a participation in the heavenly banquet. The praise and thanksgiving of the liturgical community are made in communion with the heavenly assembly. The liturgy has characteristics of both the heavenly and earthly spacetime. The earthly spacetime is transformed and elevated, whereas the heavenly spacetime is anticipated and brought down to earth. Liturgical spacetime may be considered as a different mode of existence, sharing the qualities of both earthly and heavenly existence. It is the result of the convergence of earthly and heavenly spacetime. The merging of the heavenly and the earthly in the liturgy becomes possible only because of the fact that it is the Christ himself, the God who put on spacetime in the incarnation, who is the protagonist of the liturgy. In liturgical spacetime God is entering our spacetime; on the other, we are entering God's spacetime. This idea is unique to the Christian understanding of sacred spacetime. According to non-Christian traditions, man is enabled to approach God's spacetime, but not to enter it. God descends and blesses the worshipper, but the worshipper remains in his own spacetime. In the Christian liturgy we are given the right of access to the spacetime of God.

### 3. 5. Liturgical Spacetime: Medium of Divine-human Communication

The liturgical spacetime reveals

itself as the medium of the divine-human communication. This has been the very purpose of the sacred spacetime in the history of religions.<sup>59</sup> Eucharistic spacetime is the sacramental expression of the self communication of God, revealed in the economic Trinity.<sup>60</sup> We have already seen how the liturgical spacetime represents the communication of the mystery of salvation. The liturgical actions, especially those involving processions between the sanctuary and bema symbolize clearly the divine-human communication.

The procession to the bema is the first important liturgical action in the East Syrian Qurbana. If we are to take into consideration the symbolism of the sanctuary and the bema, it is clear that the movement from the sanctuary to the bema is a movement from heaven to the world. It is the first initiative taken by God himself. It represents the mystery of the incarnation.<sup>61</sup> The commentators explain that the cross coming out from the sanctuary represents Jesus, our Lord, coming to us. The Anonymous Author says that this procession is from heaven to Jerusalem. "And thus from heaven, along the way trodden by the prophets, the ladder which Jacob saw, he descends and comes to Jerusalem. Indeed they proceed from the sanctuary-heaven-and come to the bema-Jerusalem."<sup>62</sup> According to him, the procession with the Gospel from the altar to the bema has a similar symbolism: "The introit of gospel from the sanctuary is the advent of our Lord from heaven into Jerusalem, and its reading is the doctrine and dispensation of that one after baptism".<sup>63</sup>

59. MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 267.

60. Cf. E. J. KILMARTIN, *Christian Liturgy I. Theology*, Kansas City 1988, 102,

61. Cf. *Expositio II*, 9.

62. *Expositio II*, 10; Syr. text, 7.

63. *Expositio II*, 25.



According to the interpretations of Qatraya, Bar Zo'bi, and Timothy II the access of the celebrant to the altar is symbolic of the entry into heaven.<sup>64</sup> The dismissals affirm this symbolism. For the believing community participating in the liturgy, the entry into the sanctuary is a powerful symbol providing courage and hope in the eschatological entry into heaven.

Since the whole rite of the access to the altar represents a movement towards the East, it is symbolically related to the eschatological encounter with Christ at his second coming. The Communion marks the symbolic culmination of God's communication with us. Now the communication becomes communion of persons. According to Narsai, the Communion procession is a symbol of the meeting of two Churches, the earthly, and the heavenly.<sup>65</sup> The Anonymous Author views the coming of the priest from the sanctuary to distribute Communion as symbolizing Christ descending from heaven to Jerusalem.<sup>66</sup> According to Bar Zo'bi, the distribution of Communion is the symbol of the manifestation of the risen Lord to those who believed in him.<sup>67</sup> For the faithful, this procession is the time of encounter with the risen Lord. In Narsai's vision, such an encounter is realized in participating in the death and resurrection of the Lord. According to him, receiving Communion in hands (in the form of cross) symbolizes participation in the death and resurrection of Lord.<sup>68</sup>

### 3. 6. The Horizontal Dimension of Liturgical Spacetime

The separations that distinguish liturgical spacetime from ordinary spacetime are not barriers but doors. On the one hand, this is a door to God's space and time; on the other, this is the door to man's space and time. (The rite of peace-giving at the beginning of the Quddaša (anaphora) and (the reconciliation rite) before the Communion are examples of how liturgical spacetime opens itself to man. The communication of salvation achieved through the liturgical spacetime has vertical and horizontal dimensions. Correspondingly, the communion resulted through the communication also has vertical and horizontal dimensions. Therefore, the Holy Communion demands also the communion with the people, that is the building up of the Body of Christ. The prayers and actions of the liturgy show that the liturgy is not an affair only for those assembled. The *karozutha* and intercessions in the liturgy demonstrate this social concern.

The comparative study of the concept of sacred spacetime in the Semitic, Hindu and Christian religions makes evident the importance of the horizontal dimension of the Christian liturgical spacetime.<sup>69</sup> The spacetime of the Qurbana serves as a core whose extension is the Christian spacetime. Even though symbolically the spacetime, actions etc. of the liturgy are limited, Christians have to extend them

64. See MANIYATTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 98-99.

65. *HomMyst* 27.

66. Cf. *Expositio II*, 80.

67. YOHANNAN BAR ZO 'BI, *Explanation*, 59.

68. *HomMyst* 28. Theodore mentions a similar rite of receiving Communion. "... a person stretches out his right hand, and under it he places the left hand." However, no reference is made to the cross. THEODORE, *Eucharist*, 113. He speaks of the faithful adoring the body kissing it. Cf. *ibid.*, 113-114.

69. See MANIYATTTU, *Heaven on Earth*, 265-326.



to their village or city. Examples of the extension of the liturgical spacetime to the city are found in the ancient religions. For the Assyro-Babylonians the whole city was a sacred space, the temple being its core. Being god's city the city was a holy city. There was divine intervention in every acti-

vity of the city. The liturgical spacetime prompts the faithful to the establishment of a 'holy city'. Christians are a separated or consecrated people whose presence should sanctify the space, time, persons, objects, and actions of the city or village.

### Abbreviations

- CDiat ST. EPHREM, *Commentaire de l'Evangile Concordant ou Diatessaron*. Syr. text and LT., L. LELOIR, (Chester Beatty Monographs 8), Dublin 1963. FT of Syr. and Armenian, L. LELOIR, SC 121, Paris 1966.
- ChPriest "Homily (XXXII) on the Church and on the Priesthood", in *Liturgical homilies of Narsai*, R. H. CONNOLLY, trans., TSt VIII, Cambridge 1909, 62-74.
- CSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.
- Dem. APHRAATIS SAPIENTIS PERSAE, *Demonstrationes*, Syr. text and LT., J. PARISOT, PS I, Paris 1894; PS II, Paris 1907, 1-480.
- DOP *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*.
- ET English Translation.
- FT French Translation.
- GT German Translation.
- LT Latin Translation.
- HAzy "Hymnen de Azymis", in *Des Heiligen EPHRAEM DES SYRERS Paschahymnen (de Azymis, de Crucifixione, de Resurrectione)*, Syr. text and GT, E. BECK, CSCO 248/249; syr. 108/109, Louvain 1964, 1-41; 1-33.
- HCruc "Hymnen de Crusifixione", in *Des Heiligen EPHRAEM DES SYRES Paschahymnen (de Azymis, de Crucifixione, de Resurrectione)*, Syr. text and GT, E. BECK, CSCO 248/249; syr. 108/109, Louvain 1964, 42-78; 34-62.
- HFid *Des Heiligen EPHRAEM DES SYRES Hymnende Fide*, Syr. text and GT, E. BECK, CSCO 154/155; syr. 73/74, Louvain 1955.
- HNat "Hymnen de Nativitate", in *Des Heiligen EPHRAEM DES SYRES Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)*, Syr. text and GT, E. BECK, CSCO 186/187; syr. 82/83, Louvain 1959, 1-143; 1-130.
- HomMyst "Homily (XVII): An Exposition of the Mysteries", in NARSAI, *Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* R. H. CONNOLLY, trans., TSt VIII, Cambridge 1909, 1-32.



- HomNat* "A Homily on our Lord's Birth from the Holy Virgin", in NARSAI, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension*, F. G. McLEOD, ed. & trans., PO 40, Turnhout 1979, 36-69.
- HParad* *Des Heiligen EPHRAEM DES SYRES Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum*, Syr. text and GT, E. BECK, CSCO 174/175; syr. 78/79, Louvain 1957.
- HVirg* *Des Heiligen EPHRAEM DES SYRERS Hymnen de Virginitate*, Syr. text and GT, E. BECK, CSCO 223/224; syr. 94/95, Louvain 1962.
- JL *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft.*
- JTS *Journal of Theological Studies.*
- LGr *Liber Graduum*, Syr. text and LT, M. KMOSKO, PS III, Paris 1926.
- NPNF P. SCHAFF & H. WACE, eds., *A Select Library of Nicean and Post-Nicean Fathers of the Christian Church*, second series, New York 1898, Reprint, Edinburgh 1989.
- NRT *Nouvelle revue theologique.*
- OC *Oriens christianus.*
- OCA *Orientalia christiana analecta.*
- OIRSI Oriental Institutè of Religious Studies, Kottayam.
- ParOr *Parole de l'orient.*
- PS *Patrologia Syriaca.*
- RTL *Revue théologique de Louvain.*
- SFid* *Des Heiligen EPHRAEM DES SYRERS Sermones de Fide*, Syr. text and GT, E. BECK, CSCO 212/213; syr. 88/89, Louvain 1961.
- Sogitha* *Sogitha on the Cathedral church of Edessa.*
- str. *Strophe.*
- Syr. *Syriac.*
- TSt *Texts and Studies*, Cambridge.
- WS *Woodbrooke Studies.*

## Homogeneity in the Conception and Celebration of Liturgy

The Church of St Thomas Christians made *sui iuris* on the threshold of the third millennium, is passing through an important phase of its history. A Synod of the hierarchs of this Church, first of its kind in Vatican, was held from January 8 to 16, 1996. The hierarchs are back home in their respective eparchies with the encouragement given by the Holy Father who seems to be happy over the result of the Synod as expressed in his speech at the conclusion of *Ad Limina* visit of these hierarchs. The Pope says:

There is one result of your Synod which I have noted with particular joy and for which I give you my full support: the unanimous agreement of all the bishops regarding the steps to be taken by all in order to foster greater unity in conceiving and celebrating the liturgy. I am grateful to you for the efforts you have made in order to reach this point, and I encourage you to do everything necessary to make this agreement a reality in all your Eparchies.<sup>1</sup>

The Holy Father clearly told the Bishops in the inaugural address that

they should not walk alone cut off from the "Communion" and that he intends to walk with them in their difficult journey towards "ecclesial perfection" and that he wishes to meet them again in the near future to evaluate together the path undertaken. The Holy Father says:

To leave some one behind on the way is a failure for all. To walk together in step is a victory for all, and a victory for faith and love. The Bishop of Rome does not wish to leave you alone on this path. He wants to be a help, a bridge, a means of communication. He will continue to walk each step with you, not in order to deny you your just autonomy, but to fulfil to the utmost the ministry which Christ entrusted to Peter: to strengthen the brethren and to confirm them in faith and communion (cf. Lk 22:32).

This Synod thus marks an important though not a definitive stage in the process of your Church's growth towards ever greater union and peace, towards the sharing of a common journey. In the not too distant future I

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1. Pope John Paul II, Speech at the conclusion of the *Ad Limina* Visit of the Syro-Malabar bishops. Synodal News: Bulletin of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church, (here after cited as Synodal News), Kochi, April 1996, p. 67-68.



shall ask you to return here to Rome, to share the fruit of your work with the Pope, to evaluate together the path undertaken.<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Mar Paul Chittilappilly in his homily at the inaugural Qurbana exhorted the Synodal Fathers: *"One should not stick to his own pet ideas at the risk of disunity; but must face the challenges of the situation together to achieve the goal"*<sup>3</sup>. The news from Vatican about the unanimous agreement reached by the Syro-Malabar Bishops regarding liturgy, was received with great joy and relief. The circular letter of the Major Archbishop gives a detailed report with his comments and observations on the happenings in the Synod. According to it, the Synod discussed the liturgical matters, for obvious reasons, with *seriousness of purpose* and have unanimously come to some practical measures.

"Among all the topics discussed liturgy took a considerable amount of time for obvious reasons. In the end some practical measures were adopted by the Synod for immediate implementation."<sup>4</sup>

Going through the various speeches beginning with the inaugural address of the Holy Father, the various ex-

hortations, interventions and papers presented in the Synodal Assembly, one gets the impression that the Synodal Fathers have decided to put away their differences and personal views about liturgy and ecclesial identity and to adhere to the objective and fundamental principles.

### Synodal decisions according to the circular

Regarding the question of liturgy, the Synodal Fathers, after due discussions, clarifications and consultations with experts and the officials of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, have unanimously agreed on eight points. They are, as unanimously agreed upon, to be promulgated and implemented in the Syro-Malabar Church as intermediary steps towards homogeneity. According to the circular of the Major Archbishop these decisions are:

With regard to the liturgical order in our Church all agreed that there has to be a gradual progress towards homogeneity in conception and celebration, especially of the Divine Liturgy. While we strive towards that goal the Synod wishes<sup>5</sup> to take the following as intermediate steps:

2. Pope John Paul II, The Inaugural address at the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church, L'Osservatore Romano, Eng. 3-17 1996, p. 6; Synodal News, April 1996, p. 40-41.
3. Mar Paul Chittilappilly, Homily, L'Osservatore Romano, English edition, 17 January 1996, p. 10.
4. The Circular letter of the Major Archbishop, Synodal News, April 1996 p. 97.
5. The Holy Father while referring to the result of the Synod qualifies it as **unanimous agreement of all the bishops regarding the steps to be taken by all** etc as quoted above. In the eighth point, the intermediary steps are qualified as **norms**. Besides in the Synodal News (p. 29-31), these norms are given under the title **Resolutions**. Naturally the following norms or intermediary steps cannot be treated as mere wish of the Synod but are the unanimous decisions of the Synod. Hence its implementation is a sacred duty. May we **wish** that it is by mistake the term **wish** is used in the circular?

- 1 Erect a centre at Mount St. Thomas under the auspices of the Syro-Malabar Bishop's Synod to make research into the Syro-Malabar liturgy and its relationship to the contemporary Indian culture, and its pastoral needs, giving particular attention to the local languages wherever Syro-Malabar liturgy is used.
- 2 Establish wherever possible places of prayer in which the Syro-Malabar liturgy in its integrity can be celebrated with solemnity and available for the faithful for participation.
- 3 Publish the other liturgical texts with the privileged procedure proposed by the cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in his opening address of the Synod.<sup>6</sup>
- 4 Publish the translation of the two remaining anaphoras and prepare new ones under the auspices of the central liturgical committee.
- 5 Have the Holy Qurbana celebrated in the Major Seminaries, as far as possible, in the other houses of formation, as per the Taksa, experimenting the Bema in the middle of the Church.  
On sundays and feast days normally Qurbana should be celebrated in its full solemnity<sup>7</sup> in these places.
- 6 As soon as the Malayalam texts of the Divine office are officially published, they should be introduced for daily use.
- 7 For the next two years the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated according to the existing legislation<sup>8</sup>.

6 There is a footnote appended here which says: *The privileged procedure announced by the Cardinal Prefect: "To publish and use the texts without presenting their English translation first to the Holy See for approval, if there is a general consensus in the Synod regarding the Malayalam texts. The reference to the privileged procedure is given in the speech of the Cardinal Prefect. It reads: This congregation is willing to facilitate and shorten the time of approval of the liturgical books which will be prepared, if approved by the consensus of the bishops. An experimental approval will be given under this condition, even before the translation of the text into English. (see. Synodal News, April 1996, p. 48) The Cardinal Prefect does say that the texts finalized by the consensus also needs an experimental approval. Let us hope that the Synod will not repeat the mistake of 1968. The experimental text of 1968 was already printed for use from August 15, before it was presented to the Oriental Congregation for approval by late Bishop George Alappatt of Trichur on August 6, 1968. (See the report of 12-8-1980 of the Congregation in Christian Orient, XV/2-3, 1994, p. 59).*

7 In the circular letter there is another footnote appended here which reads: On Sundays and feast days, the Holy Qurbana should be celebrated in its full solemnity" does not necessarily mean the celebration of Raza. The footnote here is certainly misleading, for it discourages the ideal celebration and betrays the preoccupation to do away with the most solemn celebration of the Qurbana even from the Major seminaries and houses of formation. Hope it will be deteted when decisions are promulgated by the Major Archbishop to be read in the Churches and other institutes.

8 The circular gives a footnote also here. It reads: "For the next two years the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated according to the existing legislation"



- 8 Prepare a text for liturgical catechesis approved by the Synod. The Synod decided that these norms should be promulgated by the Major Archbishop and are to be read out in all the Churches and other institutions.

### Implementation of the Synodal Decisions

Over 30 lakhs of the faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church have an impression that the Synodal Fathers had taken seriously the realization of peace and unity in the Church by coming to a lasting solution to the problems related to the thorny question of the liturgical renewal in the Syro-Malabar Church. In fact, no Syro-Malabarian who is really anxious about the greater good of the mother Church can ever afford to indulge endlessly in unwarrantable activities and controversies to the detriment of the growth of the Church he loves and a Church which is "one of modern Christendom's great success stories!" The enthusiasm and the determination to implement the decisions taken as intermediary steps towards convergence and homogeneity, however, seem to have melted away once the Synodal Fathers are back home. The following are the reasons for thinking in these lines.

#### Promulgation of the Synodal decisions

The Synod had decided that the

Major Archbishop promulgate the norms unanimously agreed upon by the Synod to be read out in all the churches and other institutions. Permit me to quote once again the decision:

Prepare a text for liturgical catechesis approved by the Synod. The Synod decided that these norms should be promulgated by the Major Archbishop and are to be read out in all the Churches and other institutions.

One may legitimately ask, why this decision, so important to the Church, is not yet implemented by promulgating the decisions in the form of a decree to be read out in the Churches and institutions. What is published is a report with explanations, comments, footnotes and other details of the happenings in the Synod in the form of a circular issued on the 1st of March 1996 by the Major Archbishop. The Major Archbishop has asked the circular, which is in English, to be published in the diocesan bulletins with the footnotes and the diocesan bulletins have just reprinted them. The instruction reads: *This circular letter, together with the explanations given in the foot notes, is to be published in all the eparchial bulletins.*<sup>9</sup>

Since the circular letter was not meant to be read-out in the churches and other institutions, the use of English language, which is not the

means that all the options and dispensations will continue as now. "Experimenting with the bema in the middle of the church" is applicable only to the Major Seminaries and "as far as possible" to other houses of formation." The footnote contradicts the spirit of the norm for it indirectly tells every one to be satisfied with the minimum. This footnote gives the impression that it prohibits a priest from introducing the Bema in the middle of the Church. As an intermediary step first it is introduced in the seminaries and formation houses and gradually in the churches. Hence the disappearance of Bema from the Churches where it was already introduced does not serve the interest of homogeneity.

9. Synodal News, April 1996 p. 101.

language of the vast majority of the faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church, may be justified. But all are looking forward to the decree of promulgation which will naturally be in Malayalam. The priests, therefore, have not taken pains to explain the content of the English circular to the faithful nor are they told to do it.

Still the problem remains! What about the promulgation of the Synodal decisions? If the **norms** decided by the Synod are not promulgated, how then, will these decisions reach the ordinary faithful as desired by the Synodal Fathers and the Holy Father who wished to see the decisions implemented? When the Holy Father calls the bishops again in the not too distant future to evaluate together the work accomplished what are the bishops going to tell the Holy Father? For already five months have elapsed after the Syro-Malabar Synod was held in Rome. Did the Holy Father foresee such a situation when he said that *"he will continue to walk each step with you"*?

It is hoped that the decisions of the Synod will soon be promulgated lest the Synodal Fathers should be accused of indifference, immobility and lack of seriousness. The faithful who were eagerly awaiting the decisions of the Synod held in the "presence of the Holy Father" have a right to know them and Synodal Fathers have a sacred duty to respect this right and prove that their **great desire** for homogeneity, unity and peace in the Church is genuine. Homogeneity in the conception and celebration of the liturgy presupposes, that the steps taken in this respect are first of all made known to the people and then implemented to the core. If the decisions are not promulgated here, will the Congregation for the Oriental Churches do it and

satisfy the legitimate desire and right of the people?

### Footnotes in the Circular letter

There are three footnotes appended to the unanimous decisions of the Synod in the circular letter of the Major Archbishop. There are very many people who seriously doubt, due to internal evidences, whether the footnotes though found in the circular, are in the document of the unanimous decisions or not. It is not normal that the decisions of a supreme body like the Synod, finalized before the officials of the Holy See and to be promulgated in the form of an official decree, contain footnotes. If any clarifications were needed they could very well be incorporated into the body. So also the footnotes, as already commented upon do not very well fit into the document either because they are superfluous or because they are misleading. Instead of clarifying the decisions, the footnotes confuse the readers. The only relief is that the circular is primarily a report and not the decree of the Major Archbishop.

### Erection of a research Centre at St. Thomas Mount

The erection of a research centre at Mount St. Thomas is decided by the Synod. As the priority is already detected by the Synodal Fathers, the attention of the research centre should be directed to the translation of liturgical texts into the different Indian languages. Due to the absence of properly approved liturgical texts in the different languages, some use the liturgical texts of other Churches. Some, unfortunately, become so "broadminded" that they continue using liturgical books of other Churches or forbidden liturgical texts even when there are translations true to the original. When we are looking forward



to homogeneity, the use of such unauthorized texts must come to a halt. Research into the culture, language, cultural adaptations, liturgical adaptations etc. must be properly guided and the norms given by the Holy See from time to time in this regard must be clearly followed. As far as the Syro-Malabar Church is concerned the following documents are important in this respect. 1) **Report on the state of liturgical reform in the Syro-Malabar Church** of the Congregation for Oriental Churches issued on 12-8-1980<sup>10</sup>; 2) **The Roman liturgy and inculturation** which is on the right application of the conciliar Constitution on the liturgy on nn. 37-40.<sup>11</sup>

### Places of Prayer

The establishment of **places of prayer** wherever possible for celebrating liturgy in its integrity is another decision. The decision is great and needs to be executed at the earliest. The existing prayer houses of the religious congregations may be asked to be places where one can experience the splendor of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy. It is the legitimate right of the faithful, the priests and religious to know and experience the true liturgy. The true liturgy, according to the documents of the Church on liturgy and teachings of the Popes, is the liturgy desired and laid down by the Church.<sup>12</sup> As an intermediary step towards homogeneity in the conception and celebration of liturgy, these places of prayer and the new

places, where liturgy is celebrated solemnly in its integrity, will become effective means of liturgical catechesis.

There are also dangers if clear norms are not given to the effect that these places do not become experimental centres. There is a widespread thinking among the priests and religious of India that any kind of liturgical experiments are permitted in certain centres and houses which are called **Ashrams and prayer centres**. The Directors or those responsible for these institutions pretend themselves to be Gurus and SIDHAS (Bhudas or the Enlightened) and feel qualified to do anything in liturgy and bring into liturgy anything and everything under the sun. According to them, whatever is done there is unquestionable and they must be obeyed at the point of being expelled from the so called "**Prayer experience**" or Course. And those who go there "long" for it and naturally prefer to remain. In some houses of this sort in India, the women religious have to say goodbye to their religious habits for sometime to be "free" to come to the religious experience they wish to impart?

The number of centres or the so called ashrams and prayer houses indulging in unauthorized and non-christian practices in liturgy are on the increase today in spite of explicit prohibitions by the Holy See. Some of the forbidden practices mentioned in the various Church documents<sup>13</sup>

10. This document, hereafter quoted as **Report-1980** is published in **Christian Orient**, XV/2-3, 1994, pp. 58-79.
11. Issued by Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments, L'Osservatore Romano, English ed., 6 April 1994. The document will be hereafter cited as **Roman Liturgy and Inculturation**.
12. Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, Instruction: **Inaestimabile Donum**, Vatican-1980, Introduction.
13. The following are some of the documents that give the forbidden practices reported from different parts of the world and in particular from India. **The Roman Liturgy and inculturation**, **The Instruction inaestimabile Donum** etc of Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments; Apostolic

and going on in or promoted and propagated by these so called prayer centres, Dhyan Mandirs and Ashrams may be enumerated as below:

1. Confusion of roles in the liturgical assembly,
2. Indiscriminate recitation of prayers of the celebrant
3. Abandonment of liturgical vestments
4. Liturgy celebrated out side the Church without real need
5. Homilies given by lay people during liturgical services
6. Proliferation of liturgical prayers and unapproved books
7. Use of private texts
8. Manipulation of liturgical texts for social and political ends (This happens during Charismatic conventions, Social awareness seminars etc)
9. Self-service (picking up) and sitting during communion
10. Lay people distributing communion while priests refrain from doing so
11. Rites invented outside the frame work of established norms such as introducing pet rites, hymns etc during Anaphora
12. Substituting profane readings for texts from Sacred Scripture
13. Introducing other syncretic practices. Eg. the use of non-christian symbols like OM in prayers, hymns, on objects like lamps and in churches and chapels
14. Introduction of objects like

Shivalinga, Nataraja in the Church and sanctuary

15. Postures not conducive to faith and Catholic liturgy such as sitting or squatting
16. Songs not conducive to faith or sense of the sacred Eg: using parady hymns and chants from other religions.
17. Non-christian presentation of revealed truths such as presenting the Christian God as mother

All the bishops of India, belonging to all the three Churches, have the sacred duty to preserve and safeguard the fundamental doctrines of faith and the revealed truths which are being diluted in these centres. With regard to the Syro-Malabar Church the Synod need to give clear guidance to those priests and religious who are taken up by the "novelty" of these aberrations. It may be worth publishing the names of such prayer centres or houses in the Syro-Malabar Church, so that the people can keep away from them.

### The Remaining Anaphoras

The fourth decision of the Synod is to publish the translation of the two remaining anaphoras and prepare new ones under the auspices of the Central liturgical Committee. With all due respect and without any prejudice to the decision of the Synod, I seriously doubt whether the Synodal Fathers have given the same importance of the remaining two anaphoras to the new anaphoras to be prepared. The Congregation for the Oriental Churches states that the Syro-Malabar Missal, comprising Ordo Communis

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letter *Dominicae cenae* and *Vicesimus Quintus Annus* of Pope John Paul II. of 4 December, 1988; **Report - 1980** of the Congregation for Oriental Churches. One gets the impression that these above documents are addressed to the Indian theologians and liturgists.



and the three Anaphoras, was submitted to and accepted by the Plenary Congregation of the Cardinals on May 27, 1954 and on June 26, 1957 Pope Pius XII gave his approval to the decisions of the Plenaria.<sup>14</sup>

As a member of the Central liturgical Committee I feel embarrassed to equate myself with those holy people who authored the other two remaining anaphoras. It is a fact that all the members of the Central liturgical Committee are busy with their own respective assignments and responsibilities. The members will know very well how much they are able to contribute to this cause. From my experience and contact with the members of the Central liturgical Committee, I understand that there are members who have not even seen the full text of the RAZA and read the draft of the two remaining anaphoras which are already supplied to them.

The point here is that the Church must celebrate with generosity the present liturgy for quite some time using the existing and the two remaining anaphoras in their integrity and solemnity. Then gradually she should think of new anaphoras which may evolve spontaneously and without the help of any arm-chair theologians and liturgiologists. The Prayer houses, proposed for the celebration of liturgy in its splendor, integrity and full solemnity, can definitely contribute much in this regard. Besides even after 39 years the remaining two Anaphoras are not available for use in the Church. Hence, if the already approved anaphoras can wait so long, the new ones

which are yet to be conceived by the members of the Central Liturgical Committee, in the present liturgical context of the Syro-Malabar Church, should not be prepared and introduced for use in haste.

#### **Liturgical celebration as per Taksa**

The first part of the fifth decision is to *have the Holy Qurbana celebrated in the Major Seminaries, as far as possible, in the other houses of formation, as per the Taksa, experimenting the Bema in the middle of the Church. As per the Taksa* must be understood as the celebration of liturgy without any dispensations and modifications, for the decree of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches forbids the inclusion, in the Missal, of the dispensations conceded in the directives of May 5 1988.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Liturgical Celebration in full solemnity in the seminaries**

The Synodal Fathers have decided: *On Sundays and feast days normally Qurbana should be celebrated in its full solemnity in these places.* The decision is very clear. The Fathers may not have intended the celebration of Raza with all the elements and ministers on every Sunday and feast days. It means, however, that the Synodal Fathers decided to have, at least in Major Seminaries and as far as possible in other houses of formation, liturgy celebrated in its ideal form as an intermediary step towards homogeneity. The fact that in some dioceses, the priests have not even seen the text of the RAZA, the text of the most solemn Eucharistic celebration of their

14. See the **Report - 1980**

15. "*Eadem Congregatio pastoralibus inducta rationibus confirmat dispensationes concessas in Normis Directoriis datis die 5 Maii superiore anno, quatenus et ubi diversa consuetudo invaluerit: qua quidem evidenter in ipso Missali includi nequeunt.*" See the text and English translation in *Christian Orient*, XV, 2-3, June-September 1994, p. 145-146.

Church, is not a sufficient reason to discourage the celebration of the liturgy in its solemn forms including RAZA as far as possible in the seminaries and houses of formation.

### Introduction of the Texts of Divine Office

A substantial number of Syro-Malabar priests and religious are working outside Kerala in the missions and therefore the texts of the Divine Office in other languages also must be made available with urgency. This may be the task of the research centre to be erected soon (?) at the St. Thomas Mount. Since the texts of the Divine Office are not available in the language of the peoples and places, where our missionaries are working, they use the Divine Office of other Churches which are in English and which are quite handsome in appearance. In such situations Syro-Malabar missionaries, however, follow a logic of their own in preferring the Roman breviary which is in English to the Divine Office of the Malabar Church which is in a language at least the missionaries understand better, forgetting that both English and Malayalam are equally foreign to the local people of the mission regions.

Some opinionate, even stupidly and to the extent of breaking all conventions and common sense, that if prayer is to be heard it must be done in English. They have their own way of celebrating liturgy and are very particular that others follow them without questions<sup>16</sup>. They make their own prayers to substitute for prayers

in Eucharistic liturgy and the liturgy of the hours, forgetting the sad fact that they cannot guarantee the efficacy and fruitfulness which the Church guarantee with regard to the liturgical prayers. These priests and religious are least worried about the interests and mind of the Church; the ecclesial sensibilities of others, genuine formation of the candidates etc.

### Preparation of a Text for liturgical catechesis

The liturgical catechesis is a point always said but seldom done seriously. During the last synod also this point came up and the Cardinal prefect of the Oriental Congregation emphasized it again quoting the words of Cardinal Lourdusamy.<sup>17</sup> All will agree that the liturgical catechesis must be done and it is being carried out according to the liturgical policy of each diocese. When some are interested in basing themselves on the liturgical catechesis of the Fathers and commentators, others prefer to base their catechesis on the most modern "theologians" and "fathers". There are still some others who wish to base their authority on some lay "theologians" and priests who have special charism to detect heresy in everything that the Church teaches and practices. In this context, preparation of the text for catechesis must be based on catechetical principles, the interpreters and commentators of liturgy and the instructions, norms and directives given by competent ecclesiastical authorities from time to time and taking into

16. Recently in a minor seminary, a visiting professor of English took control of the formation for two weeks and introduced unwarrantable liturgical practices in the community of young seminarians such as introducing prayers made by him to substitute the liturgy of the hours, group Mass in his own way etc. The Rector and staff were constrained to tolerate this **eccentric ecclesiasticus** in order to keep the students away from liturgical controversies. The Church needs today **Vir Ecclesiasticus** and not **eccentric Ecclesiasticus**.

17. Synodal News, April 1996, p. 48.



consideration the present day exigencies.

### Liturgical Celebration according to Existing Legislation

The spirit of the Seventh norm, as we read it, seems to be that as we move towards homogeneity one must become generous enough to celebrate liturgy wherever and whenever possible although the dispensations may be made use of wherever law permits and to the minimum. It is very important to know what this existing legislation is. The existing legislation regarding the options and dispensations is that the dispensations are to be made use of only in those places where a different custom is in vogue and to the extent it is pastorally necessary<sup>18</sup> as we move towards convergence on the basis of the other decisions taken by the Synod.

This means that the dispensations which were suppressed in 1989<sup>19</sup> by the Congregation for Oriental Churches can not legitimately be introduced in new places where there are no contrary custom in existence. Therefore, if one is really serious and sincere about homogeneity in conception and celebration of liturgy the suppressed elements may not be introduced in the new mission areas, among the migrants and in the dioceses where there are only a few faithful. There is no justification for the dispensations in many of the Syro-Malabar dioceses where the Christian community is very insignificant. In these dioceses

one cannot speak of a different custom which is strong.

### Prospects of Homogeneity in the Conception and Celebration of Liturgy

As we think of the prospects and possibilities of homogeneity in the conception and celebration of liturgy in the Syro-Malabar Church it may be useful to reflect upon some, if not on all, of the interventions of the experts in the Synod regarding this thorny issue. Fr. Robert Taft who was specially invited by His Eminence Mar Antony Padiyara to share his views on 11 January, 1996 "*with regard to the liturgical controversy in (your) Church*" proposes some principles, under nine headings, for liturgical renewal. They are: 1) Recovery of the tradition where it has eroded, 2) Renewal where needed; 3) Fidelity to the substantial unity of the Rite; 4) Seriousness of purpose and preparation; 5) Ecumenism 6) Inculturation 7) Implementation and ongoing formation 8) Pastoral realism 9) Concentration on the essentials.

Msgr Claudio Gugerotti of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches also presented a paper on 11 January, 1996<sup>20</sup> and proposed some intermediary steps in view of a gradual but decisive progress toward homogeneity in conception and celebration. The intermediary steps proposed are:

a) For two years maintain the

18. "*quatenus et ubi diversa consuetudo invaluerit*" Decree of the Congregation for Oriental Churches given on 3rd April, 1989 see *Christian Orient*, p. 145-146
19. The document that was attached to the decree (955/65) of approval of the Simple and solemn form (dated 3 April, 1989) of the Qurbana is known as Modifications. The text with explanatory foot notes is given in *Christian Orient*, XV/2-3, June-September, 1994, p. 158-159. **The main suppressed elements are:** 1) Making sign of the cross from left to right 2) Sign of the cross at the beginning of the liturgy 3) liturgy of the word facing the congregation; 4) The offertory procession of the faithful.
20. Hereafter cited as **Gugerotti's Address**

"status quo", making use of the authorizations already granted by the Holy See; b) make the use of the Raza obligatory, with the simplifications already inserted and if necessary, with other simplifications authorized by the Holy See, in all seminaries, novitiates and religious houses, according to the rubrics contained in the official text. It is essential to make use of one liturgical text agreed upon by everybody. Those in formation have a sacred right to enjoy a harmonious liturgy, free from conflict; c) erect a scientific and pastoral center to study and experience the impact of the Syro-Malabar liturgy on contemporary Indian culture, giving particular attention to create a richer Malayalam vocabulary, in such a way that it can fully express a Malayalam theology; d) publish the other liturgical books, with the privileged procedure proposed by the Cardinal Prefect in his opening discourse; e) establish several places of prayer, in which the Syro-Malabar liturgy in its integrity can be celebrated with solemnity and fervor, and readily available to the faithful; f) prepare a subsidy for liturgical catechesis approved by the Synod.

### Recovery of the Tradition

Speaking of the Recovery of the tradition where it has eroded, Fr Taft says:

No tradition can realistically pretend to ignore 497 years of its history. That is not to say that what happened in those years was always positive, nor is it to say that some of it should not be

cast into the rubbish. It does mean that it cannot be ignored, for it is a huge part of your history and must be dealt with realistically.<sup>21</sup>

No one with a proper dose of common sense will ever disagree with Fr Taft. However, with regard to the western or latin influences on the Syro-Malabar liturgy, the problem is that, almost all the "foreign influences" to which the Syro-Malabar liturgy was subject to or which some are eager to accomodate into the Syro-Malabar liturgy today do not organically fit into the genius of the Syro-Malabar liturgy; rather they are to be cast into the Rubbish, to use Taft's own words, as they are motivated by hostility to semetic and East Syrian elements and by "reductionism". So also the innovations are infact "latinizations", done under the pretext of indianization and based on some of the worst aspects of current western liturgical practice. This was already brought to the attention of the Syro-Malabar hierarchs by the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in the **Observations of 1983**.<sup>22</sup>

In General there is a "reductionist" tendency to limit and reduce and westernize as much as possible, with little awareness of the nature of ritual activity as understood from the view point of cultural anthropology- that is, one sees hardly any awareness of what an extremely delicate thing it is to touch in any way the established ritual patterns of a tradition.

In this reductionism one can perceive a certain hostility to

21. Robert F. Taft, "The Syro-Malabar Liturgical Controversy" Paper presented to the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church, Vatican, 11 January 1996. (Hereafter cited as **Taft, Controversy**) p. 5.
22. **Observations on the Order of the Holy Mass of the Syro-Malabar Church 1981**, (hereafter cited as **Observations-1983**) issued by the Congregation for Oriental Churches 1983, see text in *Christian Orient*, XV/2-3, pp 93-112.



elements which are at the basis of the spirit of this rite—as if the semitic, chaldean elements in use in India for so many centuries were “foreign”—although, ironically, the same hesitation is not observed when it comes to introducing novelties invented in the West, less than 20 years ago.<sup>23</sup>

In this context it is quite relevant to comment on the explanations of Fr Taft on **hybrid liturgy**. One is taken aback reading his explanations on hybrid liturgy. One can understand the fact that one liturgy is influenced by other liturgies as one language is influenced by other languages. But we the mortals in Kerala fail to understand how the language Malayalam, influenced by English, becomes, “**Maglish**” or “**Manglish**”. So also we find it difficult to conceive of a **Roman-Syro-Malabar** liturgy for the simple reason that even though there may be elements from Roman and other liturgies, the Syro-Malabar liturgy remains always Syro-Malabar liturgy. How many liturgiologists subscribe to the theory of Fr Taft is a question left open.

The need is therefore, felt strongly for re-asserting with Cyril Korolevskij, that not only the Eastern liturgies but also Roman liturgy should be purged of all “**ibridismi**”. All liturgies must be opened to change and ready to accept elements that organically fit into theirs from other liturgies lest they should die of stagnation.

This does not mean, however, that a particular liturgy should take all the good elements from other liturgies that are not in agreement with its genius. What is very good in one liturgy may be quite irrelevant in others.

Msgr C. Gugerotti, in this context speaks of a **point of departure, a base tradition accepted by every one and rooted in continuity**. He says:

In our task of liturgical renewal, there is a central point that we must recognize and before which we must renew our past commitments, if we ever hope to persevere into the future and avoid starting from nothing every time we meet: we need a point of departure, a base tradition accepted by everyone.<sup>24</sup>

The Latin Tradition, definitely, has made its contribution, says Gugerotti, but this cannot serve as a base tradition for the simple reason that the Syro-Malabar Church is an Eastern Church and would not be today a Major Archiepiscopal Church if this were not true.<sup>25</sup> The most unfortunate thing that thwarts and throttles down all the attempts of the Church to recognize and accept this base tradition which is intimately linked to Eastern and Syro-Oriental Tradition, is the often repeated cry of some priests and lay “theologians” who say: *The Syro-Malabar Church is not an Oriental Church.*<sup>26</sup>

23. **Observations**—1983 pp. 95–96.

24. Gugerotti's Address, p. 1.

25. See Gugerotti's Address, p. 1.

26. Most recently the Malayalam Newspaper **Mathrubhoomi** on monday, June 10 (p. 11, col. 8) reports a similar demand by those gathered in a meeting of a “liturgical Action Committee” held at St Joseph's Model High School, Kuriachira, Thrissur under the leadership of Prof. P. T. Chacko, Mr Joseph Pulikunnel, Mr K. T. Thomas, Mr C. L. Ignatius, Adv. Cyriac Thomas and Fr Antony Chemmannoor. There may be a few more names of retired people that could be added to this list,

### Seriousness of Purpose and Preparation

Another principle very important and relevant in the context of the Syro-Malabar Church suggested by Fr Taft is seriousness of purpose and preparation.

The rule of substantial unity demands that change in the liturgy be carried out only with the utmost care and seriousness, after much study and preparation. Superficial, haphazard— indeed, sometimes plain stupid—liturgical proposals are a source of shame and embarrassment to any one with any education and common sense. When one is confronted by proposals imperiously insisting that the language in an age-old liturgical text, long in official use in the Catholic Church and approved by the Holy See, must be changed because it contains doctrinal error, one can only shake one's head in disbelief. Say you dislike it. Say you think it is outdated. Say it confuses people. But do not be so utterly ignorant as to say it is heretical.<sup>27</sup>

The Syro-Malabar Church, unfortunately, is blessed with too many

“theologians” who pretend to be more catholic than the Pope himself. They find every decision, every institution and every document of the Church, not suiting their interest, either manipulated or erroneous. They find for example heresy in all the three Anaphras of the Syro-Malabar Church which are already approved and exhorted to use by the Holy See since 1957. They see errors in the various liturgical prayers traditionally used by the Church. They treat as ridiculous the symbolic explanations given by the commentators regarding the place, time, objects, persons, gestures and postures, prayers and various rites in liturgy. They also see heresy perpetuated in the sacred objects like St Thomas Cross.<sup>28</sup> However, it is a mystery that these “theologians” do not see heresy in using non Christian symbols like OM and objects like lamps with shivalinga, or when sanctuary is adorned with Natarajan, non-christian scriptures etc. to mention some.<sup>29</sup>

What is acceptable to these “theologians” are arbitrariness and unlimited freedom in liturgical matters. If anyone raises objections to these abuses then they become the target of their attack.<sup>30</sup> Unauthorized

27. Taft, *Controversy*, p. 6.

28. Recently a St Thomas Cross was replaced by a crucifix by one of the formators attributing heresy in it, from a newly blessed chapel of a formation house. On the other hand, the St. Thomas cross is used by the majority of the Syro-Malabarians and the faithful of other non-Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The Vatican paper *L'Osservatore Romano* which published the Synodal news, had the St. Thomas Cross printed on the left and right top of the paper. The author here is not pleading for the St. Thomas cross but for commonsense and respect for the other.

29. For more of these abuses see the list given above under the subtitle: **Places of Prayer**

30. Recently in Kerala a retired priest, who has made a fourth vow of special obedience to the Holy Father, has started writing open letters to an Archbishop of Syro-Malabar church whom he does not like eliciting responses and encouragements for this type of activities. He seems to be mad after collecting the list of “offences” committed by the offices of



liturgical experiments and privatization of liturgy are the norms today. These "theologians" disturbed at everything, ironically however, do not get disturbed by the frequent liturgical abuses being reported from different quarters of the Syro-Malabar Church. In order to realize homogeneity these abuses should come to a full stop.

### Bad liturgy

Can there be a **bad liturgy**? Our problem is **not** whether the liturgy, after the pre-Diamper period or post Tridentine period or during the middle ages etc, used by the Syro-Malabar Church or any other Church for that matter, is a bad liturgy or not. The **true liturgy** is the liturgy desired and laid down by the Church,<sup>31</sup> then **there is a bad liturgy**, if liturgy is celebrated contrary to the legitimately approved liturgical texts and when unwarrantable experiments against the explicit prohibitions are carried out. It is **not the theologians but the Church** and the Church alone that decides what is good liturgy and what is bad liturgy. Anyone having a little bit of common sense left with them will never say that the Church that makes this decision should be the parliament of all the faithful together.

The liturgies of the past in spite of their limitations and imperfections were good liturgies to the extent they were in accordance with the approved texts or if they were in accordance with the teachings of the Fathers and the practice and tradition of the Church. An unauthorized or private liturgy may be fruitful as a private prayer, but it is a bad liturgy. Bad liturgies which are either private or

manipulated, cannot unfortunately guarantee the efficacy and fruitfulness of the true liturgies. Therefore, coming to the concrete situation, it is stupid to say that a priest who celebrates today, the Syro-Malabar liturgy using a text of his own or the text of 1968, is celebrating "good liturgy". And unfortunately, even now some priests celebrate liturgy using unapproved and private texts in the Syro-Malabar Church.

### Pastoral Realism

The question of **pastoral realism** explained by Fr. Taft needs some comments as he discusses the question of Mass facing the congregation under this title. First of all when he discusses this issue the whole tone of the paper is changed and somehow one gets the impression that he speaks **Ex-Cathedra**, for he threatens everybody, not even sparing the Holy See, with pastorally disastrous consequences.

...it is my view, based on my long experience in dealing with this issue, observing the situation in Kerala, and hearing the views of all sides, that any attempt to resolve this issue by fiat from above would be pastorally disastrous. I say this to the Syro-Malabar Bishops of this Synod, as well as to the representatives of the Holy See: it is not the custom of the Holy See, nor is it in the best interests of the supreme magisterium or anyone else, to initiate, in a matter that has nothing to do with definitive doctrine, a battle that in my judgement cannot be won without paying tragic price.

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the Holy Father. In the "Sequel" published he claims that many Syro-Malabar bishops have responded supporting him?! The Liturgical action committee is sponsoring this retired religious, for appeals for donation by LAC is enclosed with his letters. Sent to different people and institutions.

31. Instruction **Inaestimabile Donum**, (1980) Introduction.

One fails to understand why and how Fr. Taft all of a sudden thinks of compromise formulas knowing its consequences to the Syro-Malabar Church when he himself cannot dream of celebrating **Byzantine liturgy versus populum**. Does it mean that Byzantine liturgy is the only genuine Oriental liturgy? It is true that Fr. Taft was dealing with this thorny issue for long and may be that he was receiving numerous letters and appeals to fight for "Mass facing the Congregation". But those who wrote them do not form the majority of the Syro-Malabar Church. Fr. Taft continues:

In my view, any attempt to impose, against the will of most of the bishops, clergy and people in some eparchies, a change in this usage which in some areas has been in force for years, would be pastorally disastrous and cause enormous resentment among the clergy and faithful. Furthermore, I believe it would be ineffective because it would not be obeyed.<sup>32</sup>

When speaking of the possible resentment among most of the bishops, clergy and people in some eparchies, it must be born in mind that it is easy to awake a person who sleeps, but not one who pretends to sleep. A lie repeated a hundred times becomes the truth for some people. The claim of majority is only in propaganda and not in reality. The Syro-Malabar Church has bishops with lakhs of faithful under them and bishops with a handful of faithful. Do the voices of these bishops have the same value?

Regarding the clergy and the faithful it must be born in mind that the faithful and even the ordinary priests were kept in utter ignorance regarding the various directives of

the Holy See. They had been unjustly denied their fundamental and legitimate right to know the true liturgy viz. the liturgy desired and laid down by the Church. If one is speaking in terms of pastoral concerns, no true pastor will ever deprive the faithful of their rights. The fact that in some dioceses the priests have not even seen the text of the Raza—the most solemn form of the Syro-Malabar Eucharistic liturgy may appear to be a fiction.

The time is not late. Atleast, if the responsible pastors take a little pain to bring the content and spirit of the unanimous decisions reached at the Synod, the people and the clergy of the Syro-Malabar Church will whole-heartedly accept any change introduced in the liturgy for bringing it to perfection. Even if the observation of Fr. Taft is accepted for the sake of argument, he must know better that, the Church is not governed by the majority-minority norm as made clear by Cardinal Ratzinger and the Cardinal prefect of the Oriental Congregation during the synod.

#### Liturgical celebrations In the Seminaries and Houses of Formation

If we are serious about homogeneity in the conception and celebration of liturgy it is very important that we evaluate the shape of ecclesial and liturgical formation in our seminaries and houses of formation. In this context, the observation of Dom Michel Van Parys OSB on clerical formation may be appropriate. Permit me to quote:

One wonders if a seminarian at the end of seven years of formation is able to celebrate Raza, if he knows the fullness of the

32. Taft, Controversy, p. 7



liturgical treasures of the Divine office, if he understands, to give one example, the meaning of the communion *sub utraque specie*, and so on ... I am convinced that scrupulous obedience to the directives of the Holy See and to the provisions of the Synod of Bishops (which should be in accordance) is a prerequisite for peaceful assimilation of the liturgical patrimony. Only a deep knowledge and a genuine love of the liturgy, give the assurance that eventual pastoral adaptations later will not be haphazard, but according to the proper genius of your patrimony. In the given circumstances the seminaries should not become places of liturgical experiences, if they ever should be.<sup>33</sup>

The seminarians should be guided to experience and live the mystery of Christ in and through the liturgy which is, in a greater degree, the summit and source of the priestly and religious life. This is the responsibility entrusted with the formators. Any priest-teacher is not a formator, for anyone can teach any subject provided he has some basic knowledge of the subject. The Church asks those responsible not to hesitate to remove the unfit formators. The recent Directives says:

The Church is very demanding regarding the criteria for the selection of educators. According to the decree *Optatum totius*, "seminary superiors and professors should be chosen from among the best". Regarding this point, the Council echoes the Encyclical of

Pius XI *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* which addresses to the Bishops the following exhortation: "Be careful especially in the choice of the moderators and teachers ... and assign to sacred colleges of this type priests endowed with the greatest virtue; and do not hesitate to remove them from duties which, though in appearance of much greater import, can in no way be compared with this foremost duty, whose elements are supplied by nothing else"<sup>34</sup>

The seminaries and the houses of formation, where candidates are being formed to become more and more generous in finding time and energy to glorify God for the wonders He has done, should be the last place where liturgical controversies are to be entertained. If the seminaries and the houses of formation become places of liturgical controversies or places for projecting private and personal practices or for introducing whimsical and objectionable liturgical practices, it means that we have been busy removing the cob-web and not the spider. If liturgical celebrations in the seminaries are distorted, manipulated, privatized, the formators are responsible for it. If so a thorough cleaning may become necessary. But who will do it? It is in the seminaries and houses of formation that the Synod in general and the hierarchs in particular should make sure that liturgy is celebrated and lived by the candidates to religious and priestly life. A generation of priests and religious indifferent to spiritual life which is intrinsically related to liturgical

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33. Intervention by Dom Michel Van Prays osb on the Formation of the Clergy in the Synod of Syro-Malabar Bishops held in Vatican from January 8 to 16, 1996.
34. Directives, Concerning the Preparation of Seminary Educators, by Congregation for Catholic Education (of Seminaries and Institutes of study), n. 23 in *L'Osservatore Romano*, <Eng. Ed.> 19 January-1994, P. III.

life draws a very gloomy picture of the future Church.

### Conclusion

The path, towards homogeneity in the Conception and celebration of liturgy in the Syro-Malabar Church, does not seem to be very smooth and without difficulties. We should not, however, lose heart, for the Syro-Malabar Church has passed successfully through even more precarious and difficult situations. Homogeneity, is possible provided, atleast from now on, there is a will to achieve the goal. **To start with**, the decisions of the Synod must be respected by all concerned and implemented even if these decisions may be difficult for some or do not agree with their pet ideas. The bishops and the experts had time to express their views and opinions in the Synod or they should have expressed themselves there. They may not be justified now, if they resort to lame excuses of not knowing or understanding the decisions. The priests and the faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church do not want that their hierarchs, who are excellent in many respects as exemplary pastors and models to be imitated, be accused, of "ignoranza, inertia and immobilita" to quote the expression of a Canon Law Professor in Rome. when referring to Syro-Malabar hierarchs.

In the process of implementing the decisions it may become necessary

that the Syro-Malabar Church, which is so vibrant in all respects in spite of all the man-made vicissitudes, be liberated from all unchristian and anti-ecclesial forces lurking around. All will have to work together in "communion". There must be a total change in the situation, in which some are totally unaffected by or unconcerned about the directives and instructions given by the Holy See and the agreements and decisions reached by the Synod of Bishops. In order to initiate such a process of change and liberation and purification from aforesaid forces, the basic requirements are, as Father Robert Taft suggests to the Synodal Fathers, faithful adherence to the fundamental principles provided by Vatican II and the Roman Pontiffs and a *dose of realism and common sense*.<sup>35</sup> It is easy for a Bishop to advise or ask a person who obeys to follow the directives or decisions. But who will make the unruly and the Wayward obey?

There is no dearth of instructions and directives which give fundamental liturgical principles. We find them in abundance in the Vatican II and post Vatican II documents. Besides, there are the instructions of Roman Pontiffs starting with Pope Pius XI who initiated the process of the reform of Syro-Malabar liturgy in 1934. Then there are the periodic instructions<sup>36</sup> from the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Most recently, the Congregation for the Oriental Churches has issued an *Istruzione*<sup>37</sup> on the 6th of

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35. R. F. Taft, *The Syro-Malabar Liturgical Controversy*, The paper presented to the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church, Vatican, 11 January 1996. p. 4.
  36. The text of the major documents given in 1980, 1983, 1985, 1988 and 1989 on liturgical renewal and restoration by the Congregation for the Oriental Churches as well as the speeches of the Holy Father, Cardinal Rubin, and the decrees of approval of the liturgical texts may be found in *Christian Orient*, XV/2-3, June-September-1994.
  37. Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, *Istruzione* per l'applicazione delle prescrizioni liturgiche del Codice dei Canoni delle Chiese Orientali, Vatican 1996.



January 1996, two days prior to the Synod, on the application of liturgical principles and norms. What perhaps, jeopardize our attempts to bring the liturgy of the Church the **source and summit** of our ecclesial existence is, first of all, the lack of **a proper dose of realism and common sense** due to which some pretend, often stupidly, to be more catholic, more broadminded than the Pope and the Fathers of the second Vatican Council and secondly the unwillingness on the part of all pastors concerned to implement the instructions, directives and decisions of the competent ecclesiastical authori-

ties. As I conclude permit me to quote the words of Pope John Paul II:

Every priest who offers the Holy Sacrifice should recall that during this Sacrifice it is not only he with his community that is praying but the whole Church, which is thus expressing in this Sacrament her spiritual unity, among other ways by the use of the approved liturgical text. To call this position "mere insistence on uniformity" would only show ignorance of the objective requirements of authentic unity, and would be a symptom of harmful individualism.<sup>38</sup>

Lonappan Arangassery MST

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38. Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae*, 24 February, 1980 n. 12/6.

## Covenant into *Quddasa*\* The Anaphora of Addai and Mari: A Re-reading

### Introduction

The quest for the origin of Christian worship is of tremendous fascination to scholars. This stems from the fact that, as L. Bouyer puts it, "the Christian liturgy is not like Melchizedek with a sort of spontaneous generation, motherless and fatherless"<sup>1</sup>. Scholars attempt to study the soil from which the Christian liturgy sprang up. Besides the study of Christian worship in general, one of the most important areas of discussion is the Eucharist and more precisely the Anaphora itself. The state of the current debate is exemplified in two recent Italian works. Enrico Mazza re-proposes the consensus view that the Anaphora has its roots in the Jewish *Birkhat ha-mazon* and is tripartite in structure<sup>2</sup>. More recently, Cesare Giraudo has suggested that Anaphora has its

origin in the *Toda* and is bi-partite in structure.<sup>3</sup>

Deeper probing into the origins of the above mentioned *Birkhat ha-mazon* and the *Toda* takes us to the very heart of the theology of Jewish worship which is nothing other than the covenant between God and Israel. As the letter to the Hebrews testifies, the content of the New Testament celebration is the new covenant with Jesus Christ as its minister (Hb. 8:6). In Jesus, the covenant acquires an unparalleled fullness. Hence, the common wellspring of both Jewish and Christian worship is the covenant whereby God has become our God and we have become His people. Holy Qurbana [Eucharistic celebration] is the renewal of the covenant between the Lord and man (*Sacro-sanctum Concilium*, 10). It is the

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\* In the East syriac liturgy, the Syriac term *Quddasa* (=consecration, sanctification, sacrament) means also anaphora.

- 1 L. BOUYER, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (ET. C. U. QUINN), Notre Dame, 1968, p. 15.
- 2 E. MAZZA, *L'anafora eucaristica : studi sulle origini*, (Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae Subsidia, 62), Rome, 1992, pp. 13-17; 355-361.
- 3 C. GIRAUDO, *Struttura letteraria della preghiera eucaristica : Saggio sulla genesi letteraria di una forma toda veterotestamentaria, beraka giudaica, anafora cristiana*, (Analecta Biblica, 92), Rome, 1981, pp. 81-177; C. GIRAUDO, *Eucaristia per la chiesa, : Prospettive teologiche sull' eucaristia a partire della «lex orandi»*, Rome-Brescia, 1989, pp. 276-360.



source and foundation of the theandric relationship re-lived in Christian life. For this reason, a re-reading of the anaphoral celebration in the light of covenant theology is a legitimate proceeding.

The holy Qurbana of the East Syrian tradition in general, and the Anaphora of Addai and Mari in particular has attracted many liturgiologi-cal studies. Noted for its archaic character and simplicity<sup>4</sup>, this Anaphora witnesses to the Judeo-Christian origin and Semitic background of the East Syrian liturgy. While unanimously holding the antiquity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, scholars differ in fixing the date of its origin.<sup>5</sup> However, the general consensus is for the third century.

The scope of this paper is limited. Here, we attempt to study the Anaphora of Addai and Mari and the

post-Anaphoral celebrations of the East Syrian holy Qurbana as the celebration of the covenantal relationship between God and man. We analyze the theological content of the Anaphora and post-Anaphora by studying the covenantal themes reflected in them. In the light of our analysis we also intent to put forward plausible hypothesis on the *locus* and origin of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari.

### Holy Qurbana: The Celebration of the New Covenant

Every Jewish prayer is a renewal of the covenantal relationship with Yahweh. Jews understand their prayer as a means to be united in His redemptive love for the people of God. In the New Testament, holy Qurbana is the celebration of the redemptive and covenantal love of

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- 4 G. DIX, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London, 1945, pp. 173-178; E. C. RATCLIFF, "The Original Form of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari: A Suggestion", *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1929) 23-32, p. 25; A. GELSTON, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 2-11.
- 5 For varying fixation of the date of origin, see: B. JONES, "The History of the Nestorian Liturgies", *The Anglican Theological Review* 46 (1964) 155-176, pp. 155-174; B. H. JONES, "The Quest for the Origins of the Christian Liturgies", *The Anglican Theological Review* 46 (1964) 5-21, p. 20; A. RAES, "Orientalische Liturgien", *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 6, pp. 1089-1090; F. PROBST, *Liturgie des vierten Jahrhunderts und deren Reform*, Münster, 1983 pp. 308-318; B. BÖTTE, "Problèmes de l'Anaphore, syrienne des Apôtres Addai et Mari", *L'Orient Syrien* 10 (1965) 89-106, p. 89; B. BÖTTE, "L'Anaphore Chaldeenne des Apôtres", *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 15 (1949) 259-276, pp. 275-276; E. J. CURTONE, "The Anaphora of the Apostles: Implications of the Mar Esa'ya Text", *Text and Studies* (henceforth TS) 34 (1973) 623-642, p. 624; R. J. GALVIN, "Addai and Mari Revisited: The State of the Question", *Ephemerides Liturgicae* (henceforth EL) 87 (1973) 383-414, pp. 386-397; H. WEGMAN, "Genealogie hypothetique de la priere eucharistique", *Questions Liturgiques* 71 (1980) 263-278, p. 227; G. DIX, *Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 221; B. D. SPINKS, "The Original Form of the Anaphora of the Apostles: A Suggestion in the Light of the Maronite Sharar", *EL* 91 (1977) 146-161, p. 153; J. VELLIAN, "The Anaphoral Structure of Addai and Mari Compared to the Berakoth Preceding the Shema in the Synagogue Morning Service", *Le Museon: Revue d'Etudes Orientales*, 85 (1972) 201-223.

God fulfilled in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The words of the Lord, as reported in Luke: "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Lk. 22:20) confirm the covenantal nature of the New Testament sacrifice. We find the same attestation in the other synoptic gospels as well (Mk. 14:24; Mt. 26:28). When Christ came as the High Priest, he entered once for all into the Holy Place through the greater and perfect tent, with his own blood. The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purifies our conscience from dead works to worship the living God. For this reason, he is the mediator of the new covenant (Hb. 9:11-14). For St. Paul, "the new covenant ratified in the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 11:25) is the divine economy of salvation by which the children of God enjoy the freedom effected through Christ".<sup>6</sup>

The holy Qurbana is the anamnetic celebration of the redeeming sacrifice of Christ. It is the renewal of the new covenant that God has constituted with us human beings in His Son Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. To facilitate the present study of the Anaphora and the post-Anaphora as the celebration of the new covenant, we intend to make a brief investigation into the antecedents of the covenant of the New Economy.

### Some Antecedents in the History of the Covenant

The concept of covenant is a complex reality in the Old Testament. The problem is complicated by the varieties of forms in which the covenants between Yahweh and his people are expressed, like the promissory covenant and the covenant in treaty form. There is in fact a divergence of opinion among the scholars regarding the analogy between Yahweh-Israel covenant and Near Eastern treaty texts<sup>7</sup>. For our purpose however, we may consider two covenants – the Sinai covenant and the "new covenant" – from the Old Testament, as the Christian prayers, especially the primordial Anaphora in all probability, are modeled after the Old Testament covenant. One may notice here a gradual progression from ritualism to the spirit of the covenant through the direct intervention and initiative of God in the history of Israel.

### Covenant in the Old Testament

'Covenant' is the major metaphor used in the Bible to describe the relation between God and Israel.<sup>8</sup> The idea of covenant is also used in soteriological texts on forgiveness and redemption<sup>9</sup>. Covenant expresses the life of communion between God and man which is fundamental to salvation.<sup>10</sup> According to Cardinal Ratzinger,

6. L. F. HARTMAN, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible: A Translation and Adaptation of A. Van den Born's Bijbels Woordenboek*, London, 1963, p. 438.
7. DENNIS J. MCCARTHY, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testaments* (new edition), Biblical Institute Press, Rome, 1981, pp. 1-24.
8. G. E. MENDENHALL & G. A. HERION, "Covenant", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, A-C, D. N. Freedman (ed.) et al., New York, 1992, 1179-1201, p. 1179.
9. Ex. 32:34; 2 Kings 13:22-23; 1 Kings 11:32; 15:4; Mic. 7:20; Jer. 31:32; Ez. 16:34; 37; Is. 54:10; Bar. 2:27; Zac. 9:11 etc.
10. X. LEON-DUFOUR, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Translated from the French under the Direction of P. J. CAHILL, New York, Rome, Paris, Tournai, 1967, p. 75.



the selection of the Greek term *diatheke* rather than *syntheke* to translate the Hebrew term *berith* is theologically significant. While the term *syntheke* refers to mutual agreement, the term *diatheke* has the profound meaning of becoming one will and communion through commitment.<sup>11</sup>

The most important covenant in the Old Testament is that of Sinai, because through it Israel was called to be a holy nation with exclusive allegiance to Yahweh<sup>12</sup>. However, the Sinai Covenant was conditional and thereby temporal. It was just one step of the revelation of the normative decree of God that had its time<sup>13</sup>. If we take the Hittite treaty form as the model for the Old Testament covenant, we find the following characteristic features<sup>14</sup>: a) The Preamble naming the author of the treaty, b) The historical prologue setting out the relations between the parties prior to signing the treaty, c) The stipulations explaining mutual responsibilities of the partners. d) The

document clause describing the treaty document and, periodic public reading, e) The list of witnesses to the treaty, f) The blessing and curses, g) The ratification ceremony.<sup>15</sup>

### The "New Covenant"

In the Book of Jeremiah we come across the remarkable prophecy of the 'new covenant' (Jer. 31:31-34) which is granted by the Divine Sovereign in the place of the broken covenant of Sinai. This 'new covenant' can no more be broken as it no longer remains before men on paper or stone-tablets, but is written within their hearts.<sup>16</sup> The destruction of Jerusalem and Judah was too painful a memory for Israel, and so instead of the usual historical prologue, the prediction of the future acts of God is given here, which consists of the gift of forgiveness (i. e. restoration of a broken relationship). The stipulations of the 'new covenant' are no longer a code of law of prohibitions and injunctions. So also, instead of the deposit and

11. J. RATZINGER, "Der Neue Bund: Zur Theologie des Bundes im Neuen Testament", *Communio: Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift* 24 (1995) 193-208, p. 194.
12. G. WENHAM, "Covenants and Near Eastern Treaties", *Eerdmans' Handbook of the Bible*, D. ALEXANDER & P. ALEXANDER (eds.), Michigan, 1980, 198-199, P. 198. See also DENNIS J. MCCARTHY, *Treaty and Covenant*, P. 243.
13. J. RATZINGER, "Der Neue Bund", P. 203.
14. For a detailed study of the covenant in the Old Testament, cf. G. E. MENDANHALL & G. A. HERION, "Covenant", PP. 1179-1202; G. A. MENDANHALL, "Covenant", *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An illustrated Encyclopedia*, A-D, New York, 1962, pp. 714-723. It is interesting to note that H. J. Kraus, while speaking of the analogy of the Old Testament covenant between God and Israel with the treaty, expresses a contrary opinion. According to him, this analogy with the treaty may well obscure or even distort the true Old Testament concept of the covenant, though he does not deny close external resemblance of the biblical texts with the structure of ancient treaties. cf. D. J. MCCARTHY, *Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinions*, Oxford, 1973, p. 16.
15. See below for a schematic presentation of the Sinai Covenant within the structure of the Hittite treaty.
16. J. RATZINGER, "Der Neue Bund", 201.

periodic reading of the covenant text, the knowledge of the divine will is deposited within the conscience of the people of God.<sup>17</sup>

### Covenant in the New Testament

The most important context within which we encounter covenant ideas in the New Testament are the texts recounting the Last Supper that Jesus had with his disciples (Mk. 14: 22-24; Mt. 26:20-28; Lk. 22:14-21; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). Jesus gave a cup of wine to his disciples, identifying it as the new covenant. The New Testament tradition here seems to make some deliberate connection with other covenant traditions, especially Jer. 31:31-34 mentioned above. This idea of covenant appears also in Romans 11:26-27: As it is written, The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob; and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

Christ is the true Covenant (*qyama sarira*) in person and he confirms his people in the very essence of the new covenant.<sup>18</sup> The death of Christ which is the sacrifice of passover, the atoning sacrifice, leads the figures and foreshadowings of the Old Testament to their fulfillment.<sup>19</sup> The ritual celebration of the Eucharist which is the sacrifice of the new covenant became a fundamental feature of early Christian life. As often as they came together to "eat this bread and drink the cup" (1 Cor. 11:26) they were proclaiming his death until his second coming. The stern warning of St. Paul that those who eat the bread and drink

the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner are guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord and bring condemnation upon themselves (1 Cor. 11:27) can well be understood in the general context of breach of covenant.<sup>20</sup> Just as the breach of the covenant brought punishment so also the offense against the Body of the Lord, in this case the unworthy reception, would bring illness and death which are regarded as the judgement of the Lord.

The Christian Eucharist has significant formal connections to other ancient Near Eastern covenant motifs. Its utilization of bread and wine is relevant not merely because of the general associations with covenant banquet imagery (Ex. 24:11) but also because of the aspect of restoration of personal communion. Bread and wine appear in the texts of ancient Mari in connection with the resolution of enmity and the restoration of personal relationships. The identification of bread and wine with the Body and Blood of Christ facilitates the identification of the faithful who eat and drink it, with Christ, the sacrificial victim (Gal. 2:20). This has a clear connection with the Iron Age treaty where the animal sacrificed is stipulated to be not a sacrificial animal but the vassal being placed in relationship under the loyalty oath. The central metaphor by which the early Church identified itself was 'the body of Christ' (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12). In the centuries prior to Constantine when there was but threat of persecution and death for identifying oneself as a Christian, the Eucharist was the participants' *sacramentum* (oath)

17. G. E. MENDENHALL & G. A. HERION, "Covenant", pp. 1192-1193.

18. G. NEDUNGATT, "The Covenanters of the Early Syriac-Speaking Church", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 36 (1973) 191-215, 419-444, p. 196.

19. X. LEON-DUFOUR, *Dictionary*, p. 78.

20. G. E. MENDENHALL, "Covenant", P. 722.



in which they actually submitted to the Lordship of Christ. Thus, as in early Israel, the new covenant was a socially enacted historical reality.<sup>21</sup>

### Old Testament Covenant and its New Testament Implications

Taking our lead from the published work of Mendenhall, we can devise a schema summarizing the elements of the Old Testament covenant motifs present in the New Testament writings.

<i>Structure of the Treaties</i>	<i>The Sinai Covenant</i>	<i>The NT Motif</i>
Preamble & Historical Prologue	I am the Lord Your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt... (Ex. 20:12)	The great favour God has shown through His Son Jesus Christ. The atonement of sin is the supreme act of benevolence
Covenant Code	The Decalogue (Dt. 10:4)	Love realized in the Incarnation
Deposit & Public Reading	The Covenant tablets deposited in the Ark (Dt. 10:5); Periodic public reading during the celebration as described in Ex 23:17; Dt. 27:11-26.	The Covenant as deposited within the believer (Jer. 31:33).
Witnesses	The members of the community were witnesses to the covenant (Josh. 24:22)	Witness is the martyr
Blessing and Curses	The Blessing & Curses in Dt. 28.	Eschatological vision of reward and punishment.
Ratification of the Covenant	Two elements: 1) The verbal assent to the covenant: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Ex 19:8; 24:2. b) A ritual act involving the sacrifice of an animal, whose blood is poured on the altar and upon the people (Ex 24:5-8).	Covenant ratified by the blood of Christ.

### The Anaphora and the New Covenant

Having presented briefly the content of the covenant, we will try to relate it to the Anaphora of Addai and Mari following the structure illustrated above. This will hopefully enable us to deepen our theological vision of this Anaphora from a biblical view point.

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21. G. E. MENDENHALL & G. A. HERION, "Covenant", P. 1198.

### Preamble of the Covenant

The *G'hanta* [the inclination prayer] outside the anaphoral structure presents in a single frame the entire divine dispensation of human redemption and hence serves as a preamble to the whole covenantal structure of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari:

We thank you Lord, our God, for the abundant graces you have showered on us. For though we are sinful and weak, through your mercy you have made us worthy to be ministers of the Body and Blood of your Christ. We implore you to strengthen us so that we may with perfect love and true faith administer the gifts you have given us" (OR, 42).

Here, the assembly of the faithful offers praise and thanksgiving to God who is the author of the covenant; He made them worthy to be the ministers of the Body and Blood of Christ. This is the unique plan of God to re-establish the lost divine-human communion.

The Anaphora commences with the celebration of peace. The celebrant blesses himself as well as the faithful by the sign of the Cross and everyone in the worshipping community gives peace to one another.<sup>22</sup> Here the words of Porùbcan are pertinent:

Making a covenant is an expression of peace and reconciliation, even of pardon, if necessary, between two hostile sides at war with each other or in danger of aggression.<sup>23</sup>

Peace is the effect of the covenant both in the Old and New Testaments. Pre-figured in the Old Testament, it is the result of the redemption wrought by the Lord on the Cross. It is significant that the *Diptychs* read by the deacon and the sharing of peace among the faithful take place simultaneously, for, the *Diptychs* explicitly brings the whole Church in the celebration of the Divine Mysteries.<sup>24</sup> Here, the Lord takes his people under his protection and in turn they worship him. They are at peace with God and with each other<sup>25</sup>.

### Historical Prologue and the Covenant Code

Next in the structure of the covenant comes the historical prologue which serves to explain the relationship between the two parties. In the divine economy, as revealed in the New Testament, it is the Trinitarian God who comes into covenantal communion with man. Hence we have three *G'hantae* within the Anaphora explaining the divine dispensation executed by the person of the Father, the Son and the Holy

22. *Order for the Solemn Raza of the Syro-Malabar Church* (henceforth OR), Trivandrum, 1986, p. 42.

23. S. PORUBCAN, *Sin in the Old Testament: A Sotteriological Study*, Rome, 1963, p. 299.

24. *Diptychs*, OR, p. 43.

25. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation of the Offices" (henceforth "Interpretation"). P. J. PODIPARA, in G. VAVANIKUNNEL (ed.), *Homilies & Interpretation on the Holy Qurbana*, Changanacherry, 1977, 87 - 104, p. 98.



Spirit<sup>26</sup>. It is worthy of note that each *G'hanta* presents one person of the Holy Trinity and brings to light the "great grace" or "favour" (*taybuta' rabla'*) attributed to him<sup>27</sup>.

The stipulations or the covenant code can also be traced in the *G'hantae*. However, instead of the Old Testament code of law, we have the new commandment of love and the knowledge of His will, the spontaneous outpouring of which is had in confessing

the "great favour" of God, in praising, thanking, and glorifying Him. At Sinai, it is only after the ritual preparation of the people that Yahweh appears and reveals Himself as the God of Israel<sup>28</sup>. Just like at Sinai (Ex., 19:9-15, 16-25), there is a preparation and theophany (which are related to the covenant code) in each *G'hanta*. We present below in parallel columns these elements along with the historical prologue and covenant code found in the *G'hantae*.

<i>Ghanta</i>	<i>Preparation</i>	<i>Historical Prologue</i>	<i>Covenant Code</i>	<i>Theophany</i>
2	Priestly Prayer, OR. 43	Created the world by Your grace and its inhabitants by Your mercifulness, and bestowed <i>great grace</i> on mortal men, OR. 45	Praise from every mouth; confession from every tongue; worship and exaltation from every creature, OR. 45	Sanctus and the following prayer brings to scene Isaiah's vision of God (Is. 6:1-7), OR. 45.
3	<i>Orate Fratres</i> , OR. 46	Emptied himself, took the likeness of a servant, became man with immortal soul and mortal human body; born of a woman and was under the law; left unto us the memorial of our salvation; done us <i>great favour</i> in putting on our humanity to vivify it, forgiven our debts, justified us sinners..., OR. 46-48	We render glory, honour. thanksgiving and worship OR. 48.	Diaconal proclamation in which the glorious throne of Christ is presented where the Seraphim stand in awe, OR. 48.

26. We take into account only the three *G'hantae* (the second, third and fourth in *OR*) that come within the original Anaphora.

27. Second, Third and Fourth *G'hanta*, *OR.*, pp. 44-45, 46-48, 49-50.

28. J. L. McKENZIE. *Dictionary of the Bible*, London, 1992, p. 155.

- 4      *Orate Fratres,*      *Great favour* in      We will thank and      Epiclesis, OR. 50.  
          OR. 49                      your presence in      glorify you un-  
    commemoration of      ceasingly in Your  
    the Body and      Church, OR. 51.  
    Blood of Christ  
    on the pure and  
    holy altar; Holy  
    Spirit comes down  
    and dwells in the  
    Holy Qurbana,  
    blesses it and  
    sanctifies it that  
    it may be for the  
    pardon of debts,  
    remission of sins,  
    great hope of re-  
    surrection and new  
    life in the kingdom  
    of heaven,  
    OR 49-51.

The first *G'hanta* in the Anaphora begins with an incensation and with the prefatory dialogue<sup>29</sup>. The mysteries on the altar are incensed. The Pauline formula (2 Cor. 13:13) is used to bless the mysteries and it proclaims the fact that the mystery of the Holy Qurbana is the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit for the whole community of God's people in the New Testament<sup>30</sup>. The significance of the term 'all' in this formula can be grasped only against the background of the tradition of the Hebrew Bible; it points to the whole of the New Testament Community constituting God's people. So when the liturgy uses this formula, it is welcoming not merely those who are present in the church, but all the believers on the face of the earth<sup>31</sup>.

#### Ratification and Witnesses to the Covenant

There are three signings over the mysteries, one in each *G'hanta*<sup>32</sup> before the final sealing of the same. However the focal point of covenantal ratification is signified by the epiclesis in the Qurbana. The *G'hanta* adjacent to the epiclesis mentions the name of the witnesses to the new covenant of the Risen Lord: "[Virgin Mary the Mother of God], all the just and the righteous Fathers who have found "great favour" in your presence (*spar (w) qdamayk*) in the commemoration of the Body and Blood of Your Christ<sup>33</sup>. The New Testament altar also serves as a witness to the new covenant. We have in this realm an Old Testament parallel in the covenant ceremonial enacted at Shechem. After the statute and ordinance had been laid

29 OR, p. 44

30 OR, p. 44

31 K. LUKE, "Shawtaputa of the Holy Spirit", *Christian Orient*, V. 3 (1984) 105-121, p. 121.

32 Second, Third and Fourth *G'hanta* Cycles, OR, pp. 44, 48, 51. For the precise positions of the three signings in the *G'hanta* cycles, cf. *Synodicon Orientale ou recueil de synode nestoriens*, J. B. CHABOT (ed. & trans.), Paris, 1902, 168/428.

33 Fourth *G'hanta* Cycle, OR, p. 49.



down, Joshua took a great stone and set it up under the oak in the sanctuary of Yahweh; and Joshua said to all the people: "Behold this stone shall be a witness against us because it has heard all the words that Yahweh has spoken to us" (Jos. 24:25-27).

The New Testament altar erected in the likeness of the sepulchre of our Lord and his throne and his propitiatory Body and Blood<sup>34</sup> is thus the greatest witness in the celebration of the new covenant on which the covenant is ratified. Hence, the prayer of the celebrant: "May the oblation which I received from you avail unto me for the pardon of offences and forgiveness of sins."<sup>35</sup>

In the Old Testament covenant ritual, proclamation of faith in one God was fundamental and it bound the people of God together (Ex. 20:1-3). In the celebration of the Anaphora also, we profess with Israel the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men in Jesus Christ. So the celebrant says:

...all the inhabitants of the earth may know you, that it is you who are the only true God, the Father, and that you have sent our Lord Jesus Christ your Son and your beloved; and that, He our Lord and God came and in his life-giving gospel taught us all the purity and holiness of the prophets and the apostles, martyrs and the confessors, the doctors and bishops, priests and the deacons and all the children of

the holy catholic church who have been signed with the living and life-giving seal of holy baptism<sup>36</sup>.

### Covenant Ritual Proper

There is enough evidence for the fact that there lies an intimate relationship between covenant and cult. The emphasis on sacrifice and the theophany as shown in the Sinai narratives attest to this. Moreover, the celebration of the renewal of the covenant was central to the Israelite cult. For example, recalling the covenant was an important part of the feast of the Tabernacles, which acknowledged Yahweh's continuing supremacy. Along with creation, the concrete basis for this sovereignty was considered to be the covenant made with the Patriarchs and renewed at Sinai<sup>37</sup>.

The covenant ritual described in Gen. 15:10-21 is probably the ritual often employed in covenants. Abraham brought to God the sacrificial victims; he cut them in two parts and laid each half over against the other. In the Holy Qurbana, the celebrant breaks the Host into two halves and "then he places the two halves on the paten one upon the other cross-wise"<sup>38</sup>. The epiclesis followed by the Rite of Fraction in the precommunion rites of the Holy Qurbana fulfills the celebration of the covenant ritual of the new economy.

Coming to the covenant ritual proper, we have again the *Kussapa* (in the rite of Fraction and Consignation) of the celebrant requesting for

34 "Solemn incensation at the Fraction and Consignation", *OR*, p. 53.

35 Farewell Prayer, *OR*, p. 71. However, this prayer does not belong to the East Syriac Tradition proper.

36 "Fourth *G'hanta* Cycle, *OR*, p. 50.

37 McCARTHY, *Old Testament Covenant*, p. 6.

38 The Rubrics for Fraction, *OR*, p. 55.

peace, the fruit of the covenant<sup>39</sup>. This is directed to the Risen Lord who appeared to his disciples with his peace and sent them to the world to give peace, with the help of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 20:19-23)<sup>40</sup>. The *Kussapa* is followed by the penitential psalms, namely Ps 51:1-7 and Ps 122:1-3<sup>41</sup>. The Nestorians, who use the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, add to Ps. 51 two refrains: "O King Christ, have mercy upon me" and "O King Christ, glory to thy name"; after each complete verse, the Chaldeans insert the refrains only for the first verse<sup>42</sup>. These refrains used at this particular liturgical juncture present to us Jesus the King (Jn. 18:36) who by the gratuitous act of atonement established peace.

As we have seen elsewhere, making a covenant is an expression of peace, reconciliation and of pardon. So God seals with an everlasting covenant His forgiveness and reconciliation toward Noah and his descendants and all living beings (Gen. 19). This covenant is taken as a pattern for the new, everlasting covenant of universal salvation in Isaiah.

"This is like the days of Noah to me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you nor rebuke you ... neither shall the covenant of your peace

be removed, says the Lord, the Merciful One" (Is 54:9-10).<sup>43</sup>

The incensation of the worshipping community and of the altar is a preparation for the rite of fraction in the Holy Qurbana.<sup>44</sup> This incensation, very particular in its nature, is purificatory for the celebrant, the deacon and the people. The purpose of incensing the altar is to unite the assembly with the altar, with the mysteries and above all with Christ our Lord who is offered in the sacrifice.<sup>45</sup> This incensation is also in parallelism with the covenant ritual mentioned in Ex. 24:3-8, in which the blood of the sacrificial animal is sprinkled on the altar and on the people. Letter to the Hebrews testifies that the sprinkling over the people was for their purification (Hb. 9:13). Furthermore, the contracting parties symbolically become one blood through the sprinkling of the blood. In the holy Qurbana, by way of the solemn incensing, the purified assembly of faithful become one with Christ.

During the rite of elevation the celebrant takes with both hands the Host which is on the paten and raises it, looking on it saying: "Glory to your holy name...".<sup>46</sup> As a response to this prayer, the community recites the *onila*: "I am the living bread". This rite glorifies the name of Christ and his Lordship because of his salvific covenant through the Eucharist. He

39. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, p. 51.

40. CHITTILAPPILLY, *Mdabbranuta: The Divine Dispensation of our Lord in the Holy Qurbana of the East Syrian Tradition* (unpublished Doctoral dissertation), Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, 1989, p. 217.

41. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, pp. 51-52.

42. *Missale iuxta Ritum Ecclesiae Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldeorum*, Mosul, 1901, p. 37, Cf. also CHITTILAPPILLY, *Mdabbranuta*, pp. 218-219.

43. See also PORUBCAN, *Sin*, p. 299.

44. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, pp. 52-53; see also, A. RAES, *An Explanation of the Syro-Malabar Holy Mass*, Kottayam, 1957, p. 39.

45. CHITTILAPPILLY, *Mdabbranuta*, p. 221.

46. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, p. 53.



is the life-giving bread that came down from heaven (Jn 6:51) who gives pardon of sins, salvation and eternal life. These blessings are identified with those prayed for in the epiclesis.<sup>47</sup> With true faith in the Lord's name the celebrant then breaks and signs the Body and Blood of Christ in the name of the Holy Trinity.<sup>48</sup> Once the precious Blood and sacred Body are signed, the celebrant places the two halves of the eucharistic bread on the paten one upon the other cross-wise. As already mentioned, this reminds us of the covenant ritual of Abraham as seen in Gen. 15:10.

The elaborate rite of Fraction and Consignation in the East Syrian Qurbana connotes the mysteries of Christ's passion and death. The breaking of the bread underscores the reconciliatory meaning of the rite which in its turn is a radical element of the covenant. This rite invites us to be reconciled and prepare for communion. The last priestly prayer at the Fraction and Consignation reveals the mind of our Lord at the institution of the life-giving and divine mysteries. The celebrant says:

May they be unto us, O my Lord,  
for the pardon of offenses and  
forgiveness of sins and for the  
great hope of the resurrection  
from the dead and for the new  
life in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>49</sup>

Here one comes across the central themes of forgiveness and pardon essential to the covenantal relationship.

Conversion and confession of sins are normal conditions for the forgiveness of one's own sins. The *Karozuta* of the deacon after the Pauline blessing highlights to the liturgical assembly the pre-requisites of the forgiveness of sins.<sup>50</sup> The diaconal proclamation can be divided into two parts: first, the proclamation of the whole paschal mystery of our Lord by which God the Father has once and for all bound Himself with His people in covenantal communion making thereby his Holy Mysteries, the Mysteries of the Church as well; second, the five litanies of repentance to which the assembly responds: "Lord forgive the sins and offenses of your servants".<sup>51</sup> The vertical and horizontal aspects of pardon of offenses are underlined in the diaconal proclamation:

In the hope of penance, turning  
from our iniquities, and grieving  
for our sins, let us ask mercy  
and forgiveness from God, the  
Lord of all, while forgiving our  
brethren their faults.<sup>52</sup>

The parallel rite performed by the celebrant during the diaconal *Karozuta* brings out the celebrant's meditative role in the Holy Qurbana which is also an essential element of

47. CHITTILAPPILLY, *Mdabbranuta*, pp. 222-223.

48. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, p. 54.

49. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, p. 55. For the penitential service in the Syro-Malabar Qurbana, cfr. T. MANNOORAMPARAMPIL, "Penitential Service in the Post-Anaphora of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana", in J. MADEY & G. KANIARAKATH (eds.), *The Church I Love: A Tribute to Rev. Placid Podipara CMI*, Kottayam-Paderborn, 1983, 13-50.

50. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, pp. 56-57.

51. *OR*, pp. 56-57.

52. *OR*, p. 57.

53. *OR*, p. 56.

the covenant. Unfolding the veil which is wrapped around the mysteries he says:

Glory to you, O our Lord Jesus Christ, for though I am unworthy you have in your grace appointed me a minister and mediator of your holy, glorious, life-giving mysteries. By your loving kindness make me worthy of the pardon of offenses and the forgiveness of sins.<sup>53</sup>

The mediatory role of the priest could be seen also in the Old Testament (1 Sam. 2:25). Here we see Eli's warning to his sons: "if a man sins against a man, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against Yahweh, who can intercede for him?" Then Samuel said: "Gather all Israel at Mispah, and I will pray to Yahweh for you" (1 Sam. 7:5-6). In the Old Testament, the intercessors are all "men of God"—his prophets, his priests, his servants, his chosen and righteous ones. Only such people can effectively entreat God's favour or appease his wrath.<sup>54</sup>

In the New Covenant the celebrant mediates for the congregation of the faithful:

Let it not be to our judgement and condemnation, but unto compassion and mercy and forgiveness of sins, resurrection from the

dead and life everlasting, so that we may be perfect witnesses of your glory, pure sanctuaries in your honour, holy temples fit for your habitation; that we, being united to the Body and Blood of your Christ may, together with all the saints, shine brightly at his great and glorious manifestation.<sup>55</sup>

The act of mediation becomes all the more clear as the celebrant offers the prayer of absolution:

In your compassion, O Lord, forgive the sins and offenses of your servants, and sanctify our lips by your grace, that we may bring forth fruits of glory to your exalted divinity with all the saints in your kingdom.<sup>56</sup>

The priest prays and begs that God will sanctify us, and blot out our sins by His grace.<sup>57</sup> The Anonymous author emphasizes the supplicatory character of the prayer of absolution, which the priest makes as a true mediator for his flock.<sup>58</sup>

Standing erect with arms extended, the celebrant offers the priestly prayer that introduces the Lord's prayer.<sup>59</sup> The "Our Father" is a supplication of the people to the Risen Lord, who is mediator before God.<sup>60</sup> It is also a preparation for communion with the perfect attitude of forgiveness and sonship.<sup>61</sup>

54. PORUBCAN, *Sin* p. 320.

55. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, p. 58.

56. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, p. 58.

57. *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai: With an Appendix by E. Bishop*, R. H. CONNOLLY (ed.), *TS* 8, Cambridge, 1909, XVII, p. 25.

58. R. H. CONNOLLY (ed. & trans.), *Anonymi auctoris Expositio officiorum Ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensi vulgo adscripta* (henceforth *Expositio II*), *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (CSCO), 72/76, Script. syri 32, Louvain, 1953, p. 67.

59. Fraction and Consignation, *OR*, p. 59.

60. *Expositio II*, pp. 67-68.

61. THIMOTHY II, *The Causes of the Seven Mysteries of the Church*, Vatican Syriac 151, fol. 11v as cited and translated by P. YOUSIF, "The Divine Liturgy According to the Rite of the Assyro-Chaldean Church", in J.



One of the rituals recounted in Exodus is the ritual banquet (Ex. 24:1-2;9-11) in which Moses, Aron and his sons and the seventy elders of Israel are invited to come up to the Lord where they saw the God of Israel (Ex. 24:10). There they share a common meal with Yahweh (v. 11).

The rite of communion in the Holy Qurbana encapsulates various elements of the covenant ritual, as described in the Exodus passage (Ex. 24:1-2;9-11). These common rituals can be conveniently juxtaposed in parallel columns:

### Ritual Banquet in Ex. 24 and the Rite of the Communion

*Ex. 24:1-2;9-11*

Moses, Aron and his sons alone with seventy elders of Israel go up to the Lord, (24:9)

They saw the God of Israel (24:10)

And he said to Moses: come up to the Lord...and worship afar off (24:1)

Moses alone shall come near to the Lord..., (24:2)

They beheld God, and ate and drank, (24:11)

*Holy Qurbana*

Greeting of peace, OR. 60

The priest bows and turns to the altar extending his hands towards the mysteries says: The Holy things to the holy", OR. 60

Diaconal proclamation: Glorify the living God; And the people glorify God in the Church, OR.60

The celebrant receives the Mystery first, OR. 61.

Giving communion to the congregation in both the species, OR. 63.

As seen above, Moses, Aron and his sons enjoy the presence of the Lord. For Gabriel Qatraya, the greeting of peace is the symbol of the presence of the Risen Lord. To quote him: "*The pax which the priest gives at this hour is the symbol of that peace which our Lord gave to the women and to His disciples after he had risen from the*

*dead*".<sup>62</sup> The greeting of the Risen Lord is symbolized here by the rite of peace and this is imparted as a preparation for the communion as remarked also by other liturgical commentators like Theodore. Narsai, Abraham Bar Lipah, the Anonymous Author, Yohannan Bar Zo'bi and Abdiso.<sup>63</sup>

MADEY (ed.), *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*, Kottayam, 1983, 173-237, p. 231, note 270.

62. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation", p. 101.

63. *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* (henceforth THEODORE, "Eucharist"), A. MINGANA (ed. & trans), *Woodbrooke Studies* (WS) 6, Cambridge, 1933, pp. 106, 108; NARSAI, *Liturgical Homilies* XVII, p. 26, ABRAHAM BAR LIPAH, "Interpretatio Officiorum", R.H CONNOLLY (trans.), *Anonymi auctoris Expositio officiorum Ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensi vulgo adscripta*, CSCO, 76, Script. syri. 32, Louvain 1953, p. 165; *Expositio II*, p. 69; YOHANNAN BAR ZO'BI, "L'Explication de tous les mystères Divins de Yohannan bar Zo'bi selon le Ms. Borg. Syr. 90", A. KHOARICHE (trans). *Etudes Docente*

Theodore of Mopsuestia gives an explanation to the *sanctum sanctis* (holy thing to the holies) peculiar to the East Syrian tradition<sup>64</sup> which forms part of the communion rite. The priest says loudly: "The holy thing to the holies", because this food is holy and immortal, being the Body and Blood of our Lord and is replete with holiness on account of the Holy Spirit who dwells in it. Saying *sanctum sanctis*, the priest directs the mind of all faithful to look at the greatness of the oblation<sup>65</sup> sharing the sacrificial victim. The celebrant receiving the mystery first signifies that which, Christ the High Priest has done in whose place he stands. For, in sacrificing Himself in the sacred sacrifice, he took first the nourishment of immortality and then gave it to others.<sup>66</sup> Communion of the Mysteries indicates the communion which we will have with our Lord in the coming world.<sup>67</sup> It was with this sole end in mind that the covenant of the New Testament was ratified.

Originally there was no thanksgiving at the end of the Eucharist, which itself is a thanksgiving. This further underscores the covenantal structure of the Anaphora. The idea of corporate thanksgiving emerged in Syria in the fourth century. Theodore of Mopsuestia, speaking on the act of thanksgiving, writes: After you have received the communion you rightly and

spontaneously offer thanksgiving and praise to God, so that you may not be ungrateful with regard to this Divine gift.<sup>68</sup>

The acclamation of the deacon at this point is in fact the diaconal thanksgiving for the divine gift:

Therefore, let us all, who by the gift of the grace of the Holy Spirit, have approached the holy altar and have been accounted worthy to participate in these glorious, holy, life-giving and divine mysteries give thanks together and glorify God who gave them.<sup>69</sup>

Narsai already bears witness to this diaconal thanksgiving<sup>70</sup> and it summarizes the entire Qurbana as the covenantal celebration: approaching the altar, participating in the divine mysteries and rendering thanks and glory for the gratuitous gifts.

### Covenant Term

The covenant of Sinai is summed up in the formula: "You shall be my people and I will be your God" (Jer. 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; Ez. 11:20; 14:11; Hos. 2:23). It is this very sublime experience that we taste at the covenantal communion of the Holy Qurbana.

As already mentioned, the contracting parties become one during the solemn incensing of the celebrant,

(1966) 386-426. ABDISO, *Ordo Iudiciorum Ecclesiasticorum collectus, dispositus, ordinatus et compositus a Mar Abdiso*, J. M. VOSTE (trans.), Caldei Diritto antico, Fonti, serie II, fasc. 15, Rome, 1940, pp. 100-101.

64. M. ARRANZ, "Le 'Sancta Sanctis' dans la tradition liturgique des Eglises", *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft (ALW)* 15 (1973) 31-67, p. 31.

65. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, "Catechetical Homilies", in G. VAVANIKUNNEL (ed.), *Homilies & Interpretation on The Holy Qurbana*, Changanacherry, 1977, 1-52, p. 38.

66. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation", p. 102.

67. GABRIEL QATRAYA, "Interpretation", p. 104.

68. THEODORE, *Eucharist*, p. 114.

69. Diaconal Prayer (Rite of Thanksgiving), *OR*, p. 66.

70. NARSAI, *Liturgical Homilies*, XVII, p. 30.



of the deacon, of the assembly and of the altar. Here, the celebrant uses the covenant term to address God- "O Lord our God", and the faithful become his people. Because of the most intimate sharing and covenant union through communion, Christ the Son of God has become "Our God, Our Lord, Our king and Saviour" in the priestly prayer after communion<sup>71</sup>. And the assembly of the faithful becomes "his Church his people, the sheep of his flock" (Ps. 100;3). The celebrant makes use of this treaty document as he prays the final *Huttama* (final blessing):

To Him who have pardoned our offenses by his Body and blotted out our sins by his Blood, be praises sung in his Church: and upon you, his people, the sheep of his flock, may he pour out his blessings, and may he multiply in you his mercy and his grace, and may the right hand of his providence be upon you.<sup>72</sup>

### Covenant Into Quddasa: Schema Of The Anaphora Of Addai And Mari (Including Communion) In Covenantal Frame

**Preamble:** Lord God who through his mercy made us worthy to be ministers of the body and blood of Christ (OR. 42).

**Historical Prologue:** The Trinity created the world and its inhabitants by his grace and mercifulness; and bestowed Great Grace on mortal men (OR. 45). [God the Word, the hidden offspring of the Father emptied himself, and took the likeness of a servant, became a perfect man with immortal soul and mortal human body; born of a woman and was under the law; left unto us the memorial of our salvation]

done us Great Favour in putting on our humanity to vivify it, forgiven our debts, justified our sinfulness, enlightened our knowledge, condemned our enemies and granted victory to the weakness of our frail nature (OR. 46-48). Great Favour of the commemoration of the Body and Blood of Christ on the pure and holy altar; Holy Spirit comes down and dwells in the Holy Qurbana, bless it and sanctify it that it may be for the pardon of debts, remission of sins, great hope of resurrection and new life in the kingdom of heaven (OR. 49-51).

**Covenant Code:** Praise from every mouth; confession from every tongue; worship and exaltation from every creature (OR. 45). We render glory, honour, worship and thanksgiving (OR. 48). All the inhabitants of the earth may know You who are the only true God and the divine plan of salvation fulfilled in Christ (OR. 50). We will thank and glorify You unceasingly in Your Church (OR. 51). Without blemish, with pure hearts and trustful countenance and with confidence we shall altogether invoke You saying: Our Father .. (OR. 59). We shall give glory to You with the hymn "thrice holy" in the company of the just (OR. 64).

**Witnesses:** Altar of forgiveness (OR. 71) erected in the likeness of the sepulcher of our Lord and his throne and his propitiatory Body and Blood (OR. 53). And [Virgin Mary, Mother of God] all the just and righteous fathers who have found great favour in his presence in the commemoration of the Body and Blood of Christ (OR. 49).

**Blessings and Curses:** a. **Blessings:** All the spiritual gifts in heaven through Jesus Christ (OR. 68). Pardon of debts

71. Priestly prayer, OR, p. 67.

72. *Huttama* on Ferial days, OR, p. 69.

and remission of sins, great hope of resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven (OR. 49-51;55,56,58,61,69,71). Sanctification of our bodies and purification of our conscience (OR. 61). Life everlasting and confidence in His sight (OR. 64-65).

**b. Curses:** Judgement and condemnation (OR. 58,61). Weakness and infirmity (OR. 64).

**Ratification:** Epiclesis by which the Holy Spirit comes down, and dwells in the Qurbana and blesses it and sanctifies it (OR. 50). And the Rite of Fraction and Consignation in which the glorious, life-giving and divine mysteries are set apart, hallowed, perfected, completed, united and commingled each to each, in the adorable and exalted name of the most glorious Trinity (OR. 55).

**Covenant Term:** God becomes our God and we, His people (OR. 52-53). Christ is our God, our Lord, our King and our Saviour (OR. 67). We are His Church, His people, the sheep of His flock (OR. 69).

We have been trying to re-interpret the Anaphora of Addai and Mari and the Post Anaphoral celebrations in the light of the concept of the covenant and its theological content. Besides the communitarian aspect of the relationship between God and His people, the New Testament covenant develops the personal response of the faithful. Hence in the New Testament covenant the relation becomes more intimate and deeper. This perfection of relationship is ratified by the blood of Christ the Son of God. The person of Christ is therefore the basis of the uniqueness of the New Testament covenant.

The celebration of the covenant, realized in the holy Qurbana and especially in the Anaphora, is the celebration of the person of Christ. He is the Great Favour of God the

Father. The entire divine dispensation is anamnetically realized in the Anaphora. It commemorates the three great moments of this divine dispensation through three *G'hantae*: God's "great favour" through creation (*G'hanta* 2), through redemption by the Son (*G'hanta* 3), and the "great favour" of the entire liturgical celebration in the Church the power of the Holy Spirit (*G'hanta* 4) which is the pre-taste of the life to come. The worshipping community can respond to this "great favour" only through praise, worship and exaltation (*G'hanta* 2), glory, honour, thanksgiving and worship (*G'hanta* 3) and through thanking and glorifying God unceasingly in the Church (*G'hanta* 4). Such an attitude of praise and worship becomes inevitable owing to the theophany of God the Father (cfr. Sanctus), of God the Son (cfr. Diaconal Proclamation) and of God the Spirit (cfr. the Epiclesis).

Here we find that the covenantal relationship in the New Testament is both communitarian and personal. The Holy Trinity is present in the celebration as triune God and through their individual missions. Hence, the covenantal celebration in the Anaphora calls for a communitarian and personal response from the part of the worshipping community.

The communitarian and personal dimensions are further concretized in the covenantal communion celebrated in the Post-Anaphora. God brings man to His banquet table for a personal as well as communal sharing. The faithful are prepared to realize the communion through forgiveness and reconciliation. They are also granted the gifts of forgiveness of sins, peace and salvation. Thus the faithful are called to be both the recipients as well as the dispensers (through witnessing) of the compassion and great mercy of the Holy Trinity. The ritual banquet of Holy Communion symbolizes the dimensions of reception and



witnessing. Hence the Concluding Rites take the form of thanksgiving for the gratuitous gift of God's compassionate love and the noble responsibility of dispensing the divine compassion through a personal and communitarian testimony.

### The Anaphora of Addai and Mari: *Some Conclusions*

The covenantal nature of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari leads us to make some observations about its provenance and the identity of early Syriac Christianity. We dare to make such hypotheses basing our arguments on the evidence brought out through the foregoing study. However, we limit these observations to the *locus* and date of the origin of the Anaphora and the identity of the worshipping community where the Anaphora must have taken shape.

### The Origin of the Anaphora: A Proposal

The above study has led us to a re-interpretation and understanding of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari as the celebration of the new covenant. This is very plausible considering the Judeo-Christian origin of the first Christians of this liturgical tradition. It would seem that these Judeo-Christians interpreted the words of the Lord at the Last Supper (Lk 22:19) in the light of the existing covenant relationship that Israel had with Yahweh. Thus their celebration of the covenant of the new Pasch in Jesus Christ in all probability might seem to be a christianized form of the Old Testament covenant celebration.

### The Anaphora of Addai and Mari: From the Liturgical Assembly of the Covenanters

The re-interpretation of Addai and Mari as the new covenant celebration presupposes a liturgical assembly. In this assembly, Addai and Mari must have undergone the process of *freedom to formula*<sup>73</sup> or it went through the process of arriving at a *shape*.<sup>74</sup> Our knowledge of the liturgical practice of the Covenanters of the early Syriac Church confirms the possibility of such a celebration. These early Christians were definitely identified with the *Qyama*, whether that term be understood as 'covenant' or as 'the Resurrection' (*qyama* is derived from *qwm*, meaning 'to rise up', to 'stand'). Aphrahat uses the term *qyama* twice as the equivalent of *qyama* meaning 'resurrection'. However, one has to logically conclude that these Christians could not have identified themselves with some mere idea or theme or even with some historical event, but only with the person of Jesus Christ himself, the Risen Lord. Here, the observation of Harvey is of interest: "... the 'covenant' of the consecrated life is not different from the 'stance' or covenant the lay Christian has taken by the commitment of faith".<sup>75</sup> Therefore, it was their conversion to the Christian way of life that made them 'covenantal'. This covenant was a pact or oath to the Risen Lord and the Holy Qurbana was the celebration and commemoration of this new covenant as manifest in the person of the Risen Lord.

We find a similar current within the Roman empire. Around A. D. 112,

73. A. BOULEY, *From Freedom to Formula: "The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts"*, Washington, D. C., 1981.

74. G. DIX, *Shape of the Liturgy*.

75. S. A. HARVEY, "Edessan Martyrs and Ascetic Tradition", *The Harp* 6 (1993) 99-110, p. 104.

Pliny the Younger, in his famous letter to the Roman emperor Trajan reported that the interrogation of a captured Christian yielded the information that Christians gathered *se sacramento obstringere* (to bind themselves by an oath). The reference is certainly to the Eucharistic celebration, which was identified as a *sacramentum* (sacrament) from as early as the first century. The Latin *sacramentum* at the time of the early Church referred to a soldier's oath of loyalty to the Roman emperor. Thus the early Christians understood the Eucharist as taking an oath with respect to Christ.<sup>76</sup>

Hence one might plausibly conclude that the first stratum of Addai and Mari took shape in the context of the liturgical celebration of the *Bnay Qyama* as the commemoration and celebration of covenanters' pact with the Risen Lord.

### Date of Origin of Addai and Mari

Once we come to know the above *locus* of the origin of Addai and Mari, we are led to the date of its origin. Already in the fourth century Mar Aphrahat (+345) gave due importance to the instruction of the members of the *Bnay Qyama*. Hence a fourth century *terminus ante quem* for the origin of Addai and Mari seems beyond doubt. But can we push this date of origin back even earlier?

The Syriac documents ante-dating Mar Aphrahat have ample reference to a eucharistic community. The Acts of Judas Thomas (beginning of the third century)<sup>77</sup>, include chapter 153 on the eucharistic celebration.<sup>78</sup> However, the Odes of Solomon (c. 100 AD)<sup>79</sup> do not refer to the eucharistic celebration. According to Sebastian Brock, the central theme in the Odes of Solomon and in the Virginity Hymns

76. MENDENHALL & HERION, "Covenant" pp. 1198-1199. See also J. A. JUNGSMANN, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origin and Development* (*Missarum Sollemnia*), Vol. 1, (ET) F. R. BRUNNER, Westminster, Maryland, 1986, p. 18. For a discussion on the letter of Pliny see: F. J. DOLGER, *Sol salutis: Gebet und Gesang in christlichen Altertum mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Ostung im Gebet und Liturgie*, Münster, 1925, pp. 105-136; H. LIETZMANN, *Die Liturgischen Angaben des Plinius: Geschichtliche Studien* Albert Hauck zum 70. Gebrulstage, Leipzig, 1916, p. 38.

77. F. C. BURKITT, *Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire*, Cambridge, 1899, p. 76; *The Acts of Thomas* (henceforth *Acts*), A.F.J. KLIJN (ed.), Leiden, 1962, p. 26, A. VOOBUS, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient: A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East, I: The Origin of Asceticism, early Monasticism in Persia* (henceforth *Asceticism I*), CSCO 197, Subsidia Tomus 81, Louvain, 1980, p. 67; I. ORTIZ De URBINA, *Patrologia Syriaca*, Roma, p. 37. Medlycott argues for an even earlier origin of the Acts of Judas Thomas. A. C. MEDLYCOTT, *India and the Apostle Thomas: An Enquiry with a critical Analysis of the Acta Thomae*, London, 1905, pp. 291-292.

78. W. WRIGHT, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: Edited from Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum and other Libraries*, 2, Vols. (Syriac texts and English Translation), London, 1871, vol. I, p. 324; A.F.J. KLIJN, *Acts*, p. 149. For a discussion, on the Eucharist in the *Acts*, A.F.J. KLIJN, *Acts*, pp. 54-61.

79. J. H. CHARLESWORTH, "Odes of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction", in J. H. CHARLESWORTH (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, New York, 1985, 725-771, p. 727; R. MURRAY



of Mar Aprem is the spiritual marriage of the faithful with Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, in anticipation of the union with him in the heavenly bridal chamber<sup>80</sup>. Nevertheless, the liturgical setting of the Odes which is centered on the baptismal celebration is very probable<sup>81</sup>. This again reminds us of the early catechumenate and *Bnay Qyama* community. According to A. Vööbus, the entrance ceremony of the *Bnay Qyama* is baptismal in nature<sup>82</sup>. Hence it is reasonable to propose that the Anaphora of Addai and Mari probably took shape between the period of Odes of Solomon and that of Acts of Judas Thomas.

The process of shaping of this Anaphora should be seen as a natural evolution and had its theological interpretation by the liturgical school of Edessa. This is because the primary need of the Edessan community was to initiate the 'new Christians' into the Christian way (*urha*) through the sacrament of baptism. Hence baptism received a paschal interpretation (Rom 6:3). Once the community was formed, then there was the need to be nurtured through the supernatural life; this led to the further interpre-

tation of the Eucharist as the celebration of the new Covenant, following the word of the Lord (Lk. 22:19) and guided by the teaching of the Apostles (1 Cor, 11:23-27). Hence I would fix the origin of Addai and Mari in its first stratum in the second century. It was thus probably known to the author of Acts of Judas Thomas in the third century.

### A Re-interpretation of the Nature of *Bnay Qyama*

Recent liturgical studies suggest that the nature of the *Bnay Qyama* needs to be reconsidered<sup>83</sup> and to have studies adequately with liturgical evidence. The factor which divided the Judeo-Christians from their Jewish brethren was the new Pasch in the Upper Room in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the New Pasch (1 Cor 5:7). Therefore, the question would be whether the covenanters of early Syriac Christianity were affiliated to the event of the covenant or to the resurrection of Christ, the sons of the covenant being sons of resurrection. In my view it would be more reasonable, from the point of liturgical history, to think that their

*Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, London, 1975, p. 24.

80. S. P. BROCK, *Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition*, Kottayam, 1990, p. 65.
81. J. H. Bernard is the main proponent of a liturgical setting of the Odes. J. H. BERNARD, *The Odes of Solomon* (edited with Introduction and Notes) TS 8. 3, Cambridge, 1912, p. 42. J. H. Charlesworth also admits the liturgical background, especially the apparent stress on baptism. J. H. CHARLESWORTH, "Odes: A New Translation", p. 728.
82. A. VOÖBUS, *Celibacy: A Requirement for Admission to Baptism in the Early Syrian Church*, Stockholm, p. 49; G. NEDUNGATT, "Covenanters", p. 441; A. VOÖBUS, *Asceticism I*, pp. 13-14, 25, 63, 93-95, 173-178, 185-186.
83. See in particular S. H. GRIFFITH, "Monks «Singles» and the «Sons of the Covenant»: Reflections on Syriac Ascetic Terminology", *EOSOTHTMA: Studies in Honour of Robert Taft, S J, (Studia Anselmiana 110)*, Rome, 1993, pp. 141-160; G. NEDUNGATT, "Covenanters", pp. 191-215, 419-444; R. MURRAY, "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syrian Church", *New Testament Studies* 21 (1974-75) 59-80.

affiliation was to the person of the Risen Lord who is the mediator of the new covenant<sup>84</sup>. Therefore, it would seem that all those who were baptized were first called *Bnay Qyama*, having taken an oath to the Risen Lord. The process of identifying the elite or the monks with the *Bnay Qyama* could be a later development. Hence thinking the other way around, all Christians in the Syriac world might have been originally called *Bnay Qyama* in order to differentiate them from the Jews who were 'the covenant people'; their distinguishing mark was their faith in the Risen Lord identifying themselves as *Bnay Qyama*. However, through a later development, as we find in various Christian communities, the more committed and fervent Christians came into existence as a result of the pre-monastic movements. In the Syriac world, these elite or proto-monks could have been separated from their fellow Christians as *Bnay Qyama*.

Aphrahat uses the term *nzîr*<sup>85</sup> in its verbal form, (though not as a technical term for covenanters) to describe the ascetical life of the *Bnay Qyama*.<sup>86</sup> He distinguishes several kinds

of fast, by which is meant the entire mode of life of the covenanters. The violation of a fast without vow is not a serious sin, whereas the transgression of a fast with vow is a grave sin. He also uses the word *nzîrâ* and the related *nzîrûtâ* and *etnazar* (to make oneself a Nazarite with a vow).<sup>87</sup>

### Conclusion

The above study is a re-interpretation of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari as the celebration of the covenantal relationship between God and His people. The anamnetic celebration of the covenantal relationship through the holy Qurbana gives a global vision of its content. Its Old Testament prophecy, New Testament fulfillment and its accomplishment in the Church are thereby better understood and commemorated. Thus the celebration of the holy Qurbana condenses the central liturgical theology canonized by Vatican II (SC 5-7).

The study brings out the centrality of the Anaphora as the renewal of the covenant. In the liturgy of the Word, the liturgical assembly is prepared collectively and individually

84. This interpretation is also supported by the historical fact that the process of historicization of the liturgy celebrating the mysteries of redemption began only in the fourth century, probably from the time of Cyril of Jerusalem and Egeria, centered on Jerusalem.

85. *Nazîrê* is the plural of *Nazîra* which means a Nazarite, a man separated from wine; hence he is an abstinent, celibate, ascetic, a monk. J. PAYNE SMITH (MRS. MARGOLIOURTH) (ed.), *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, (Founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith D. D.), Oxford, 1985, p. 334.

86. The St Thomas Christians of India are known by the name *nazrani*. They were also called lovers of fasting. For details see P. J. PODIPARA, *Nammude Rittu* [= Our Rite]. Mannanam, 1944, pp. 41-42; P. VAZHEEPARAMPIL, "Thoma Marga : Icon of the Indo-Oriental Identity of the St. Thomas Christians of India", *Christtan Orient* 15 (1994) 2-23, pp. 18-19; *Ostkirchliche Studien* 43 (1994) 187-210. The term *nazrani* and the life style of the St Thomas Christians of India, in fact, refer to the Judeo-Christian origins of this apostolic community.

87. G. NEDUNGATT, "Covenanters", p. 213.



at and around the *bema*. The second phase at the Pre-Anaphora is preparatory in nature while at the same time it gives us a foretaste of the covenant celebrated in the Anaphora. The celebration of the covenant through the Anaphora. The celebration of the covenant through the Anaphora receives a joyful conclusion at the Communion service which enables the faithful to commit themselves to dispense the same compassion and mercy of the holy Qurbana to others.

The covenantal celebration underlines the nature and depth of relationship between God and man. It is an existential and eternal relationship of God and His people prefigured in the Old Testament. God reveals His Being as One and Three in the Holy Trinity. The immanent Trinity becomes the model *par excellence* of the worshipping community for its communitarian and personal Christian life.

The holy Qurbana is the celebration of the *mdabbranuta* (divine dispensation) of the Holy Trinity for all creation. This is specified as the Great Favour in the Anaphora of the Apostles. Thus the covenant celebration in the holy Qurbana especially in the Anaphora and Post-Anaphora becomes a personal and communitarian experience of the person of Jesus Christ through his Body and Blood. The response of the worshipping community for the Great Favour, hence, is one of praise, worship and thanksgiving. They stand with awe and veneration as they join

the heavenly assembly of angels, saints and the entire cosmos to render worship and thanksgiving for the ineffable gifts received.

The ancient liturgical assemblies gave form or shape to their particular ways of covenantal celebration in their eucharistic assemblies. This resulted in the formulation of various Anaphorae. The Christians of Edessa, with their Judeo-Christian origin must have given shape to an Anaphora and attributed the same to their venerable Apostles Addai and Mari. Their *Sitz im Leben* influenced its formulation after the structure of the covenant with which they and their ancestors were better identified. This position will be further confirmed if we consider that the entire Edessan Syriac Christian community was called the "Covenanters" (*Bnay Qyama*), and not exclusively the monastic community. We may safely conclude that their consciousness as the covenant people goes back to the very first phase of Syriac Christianity itself. Hence the early origin (perhaps to the second century) of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari becomes all the more plausible.

These concluding observations are presented not as absolute affirmations, but as hypotheses for further deeper study and reflection in the hope that it will open a new path in the study of the origins of Christian worship, illuminating certain cloudy phases of early liturgical history and Christianity.

## Book Review

**ERICH RENHART, Das syrische Bema: Liturgisch-archäologische Untersuchungen** [= Grazer Theologische Studien, 20], Graz: Eigenverlag des Institutes für Ökumenische Theologie und Patrologie an der Universität Graz (Universitätsplatz 3, A-8010, Austria), 1995, 204 pages, ppb. n.p.

Written under the direction of Prof. (now emeritus) Philipp Harnancourt, Dr. Renhart's dissertation will certainly contribute to a wider knowledge of church archaeology, but at the same time it has to play an important role in the better understanding as well as in the restoration of the liturgies of the Churches of Syriac traditions, eastern and western. The recent *Istruzione per l' Applicazione delle Prescrizioni Liturgiche del Codice dei Canoni delle Chiese Orientali*, published on January 6, 1996 by the Roman Congregation for the Oriental Churches (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996, 95 pages), is speaking about the importance of the bema which should be restored in ancient churches and find its appropriate place in the construction of new ones (no. 105). The author of our book presents, in the first, part of his work, some basic and essential informations. He describes the aim of his dissertation, speaks of the archaeology of the »Bema-churches« and adds what he calls »historico-theological notes«, i.e. on Mar Severos of Antioch. The more important is the second part of his dissertation. After having presented the term bema, as found in dictionaries, in the New Testament, and in the Syriac patristic literature (in the appendix of this part we find quotations from Ephrem, Severos and others) he concentrates on the bema in liturgical texts quoting the witness of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Testamentum Domini*, the anonymous *Syro-oriental Expositio officiorum ecclesiae* and various documents concerning the consecration of muron. There upon he describes the *Ordo quo episcopus urbem inire debet* (Order according to which the bishop has to enter a city) and a rubric before the 'adoration of the cross'. The bema also appears in liturgical texts, e.g. in a *sugita* on the church of Edessa and in a *mimra* for the Sunday of »Hosanna« attributed to Mar George, the Bishop of the Arabic tribes († 724). In the third chapter of the second part, the author gives interesting insights into the councils and synods, in the iconography, etc. The last chapter examines the Manichean bema feast according to the Coptic-Manichean Book of Psalms and the bema itself according to this source. What is praiseworthy in this dissertation is, that each chapter is concluded by a resume. A larger summary called by the author »integration« is found at the end of the book. An index of modern authors is added, further an index referring to the term bema, a rich bibliography, a short biography of the author and a one-page French *sommaire*. We wish Dr. Renhart to publish, also in the time to come, the results of his research either in book form or, e. g., in the review *Heiliger Dienst* of Salzburg to whose editorial staff he belongs.

John Madey



# News

## **New Heads for Vatican Dicasteries**

The prefects of the Congregation for the clergy and the Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments have been changed. Archbishop Dario Castrillon Hoyos is the new head of the Congregation for the Clergy. The Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments will be headed by Bishop Jorge Arturo Medina Estévez. Both of them hail from South America and are appointed as Pro-Prefects. They may eventually be named Cardinals.

## **Holy Father Visits Germany**

From 21 to 23 June 1996 the Holy Father John Paul II made his first visit to Germany after its unification. This visit was very important because of many reasons. First, it was the first visit of the Pope after the historical unification which has besides the political impact also the ecumenical importance. Christians from the East Germany were mostly non-Catholics. Their presence in the unified Germany calls for intensifying ecumenical efforts. Secondly, there is a growing unrest both among some theologians and a section of the laity on very important issues of Christian faith and tradition. Some have even declared themselves as "We are the Church". Clerical celibacy, priesthood of women, appointment of Bishops, etc. are only some of the issues. There were some public demonstrations from among these groups. The Pope however appealed to all to unite themselves in true and authentic faith of the Church.

## **Holy Father met the chief Rabbi of Rome**

A friendly meeting of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II and the chief Rabbi of Rome, Professor Elio Toaff, took place on April 15 in the Vatican. The Holy Father underlined the need of a new spirit of mutual understanding and love between Christians and the Jews.





## OIRSI Publications, Recent Books

170. Dr. James Arampulickal, *The Pastoral Care of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Migrants*, 1994, pp. 336, Rs. 120/-
171. Dr. Joseph Perumthottam, *A Period of Decline of the Mar Thoma Christians*, 1994, pp. 324, Rs. 100/-
172. Victor J. Pospishil, *Eastern Catholic Church Law-Commentary*  
1994, pp. 700, Rs. 250/-
173. O. I. R. S. I., *Roman Documents on the Syro-Malabar Liturgy*, 1995,  
pp. 160, Rs. 50/-
174. Fr. Jacob Thekkemury, *Velipadu 1 - 3*, (M) 1995, pp. 188, Rs. 35/-
175. Dr. Cherian Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishop's* 1995, pp. 592, Rs. 240/-
176. Dr. George Madathikandam, C. B. C. I., *An Interecclesial Assembly*  
1995, pp. 352, Rs. 150/-
177. Dr. Xavier Koodapuzha, *Sabhavijnaniyam (M)*,  
1995, pp. 700, Rs. 150/-
178. Dr. Kurian Valuparampil, *Ita Kartavinte Dasi (M)*, 1995, pp. 160,  
Rs. 40/-
179. Dr. G. Chediath, *Synodicon Orientale*, 1996
180. Dr. Xavier Koodapuzha, *Oriental Churches : An Introduction*  
1996, pp. 200, Rs. 70/-
181. Luke Poothrukayil, *Christian Response to Ecological Challenges*, 1996,  
pp. 164, Rs. 50/-
182. Mary Panthapallil, *Mary, The Type of the Church in the Johannine Writings: A Biblico - Theological Analysis*, 1996, pp. 300, Rs. 200/-